Entertainment / A2-1
Janet Leigh, star of classic 'Psycho,' is dead at 77

■ **Metro / A21**
Navotas cops launch feeding program for kids

■ **World / A13**
Nobel Prize for medicine given to 2 US scientists

■ **Metro/ A21**
Gold diggers in QC ignore warning on deadly diseases

■ **News / A2**
SC stops sale of SSS stake in Equitable-PCIB

Tanong ng Bayan / A20
Mga imbestigasyon ng Kongreso: May silbi ba?
Win a 21" TV! Text 2910 now!

State lawyers get tough on cell phone snatchers

By Philip C. Tubeza

STATE prosecutors have been ordered to give high priority to cases of cell phone snatching and to reject affidavits of desistance from victims, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño said yesterday.

A memo to that effect was actually issued

STATE/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Piatco bars gov't team from inspecting Naia 3

By Clarissa S. Batino

PIATCO turned away a six-member government inspection team led by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye and Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza.

Philippine International Air Terminals Co., or Piatco, barred the top officials from enter-

PIATCO/ A8

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Wednesday, October 6, 2004 ★★ 56 pages / 5 sections / vol. 19 / no. 301 P18
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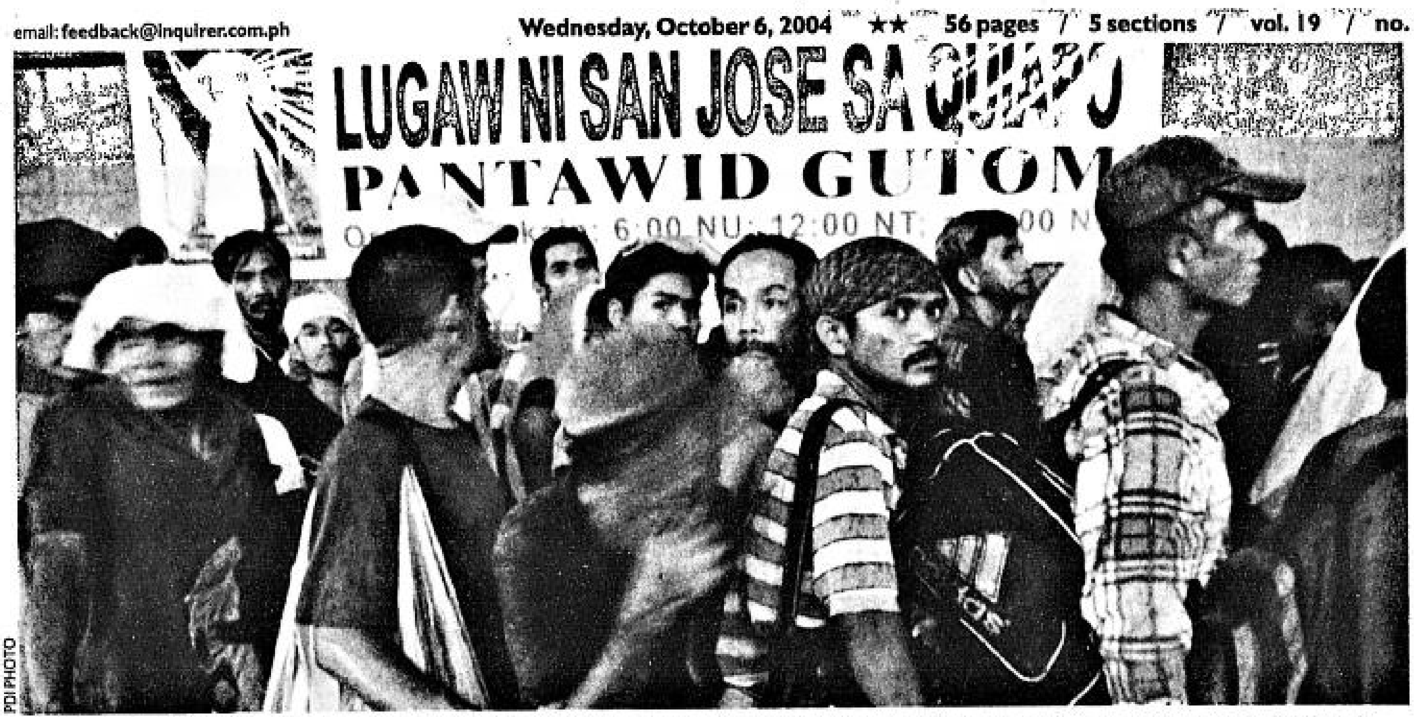


THE LONG GRAY LINE of itinerant workers and vagrants has become a familiar sight in Plaza Miranda where the Quiapo Catholic Church provides free "lugaw" (porridge) daily from 6 a.m. to noon. The Church's project had been feeding hundreds long before President Arroyo ordered the distribution of food coupons to poor families.

High oil prices, floods send inflation soaring

By Michelle V. Remo

SOARING oil prices and low food supply due to floods pushed inflation last month to its highest level in more than five years, prompting the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) to issue a warning that inflation for the year could exceed targets by a significant margin.

Inflation rose to 6.9 percent (using 1994 as the base year) in the year through September, from 6.3 percent in the year through August, the National Statistics Office (NSO) reported yesterday. (Using 2000 as the base year, inflation last month stood at an even higher rate of 7.2 percent.)

The inflation rate was the highest since the 8 percent in April 1999, although 6.9 percent was also recorded in January 2001.

"This shows that inflationary pressures are becoming more permanent than transitory. The combined ethnic unrest in Nigeria and the start of the winter season are expected to add pressure to the already tight world oil supply," Neda Director General Romulo Neri said.

Last week, benchmark US crude prices hit a record high of more than $50 a barrel and are

HIGH OIL/ A10

Food coupons for poor

DSWD says program to benefit 5M families

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Christine O. Avendaño and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A LIFELINE in the form of food coupons—that is one of Malacañang's answers to the problem of hunger stalking a growing number of Filipino households.

Saying she could not shut her eyes to the problem, President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the distribution of food coupons to the "poorest" families in the country.

Ms Arroyo directed the Department of Social Welfare and Development to come up with a voucher system under which the poorest families could avail themselves of free grocery supplies, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday.

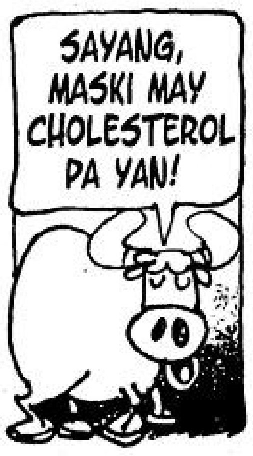
The idea of emergency food coupons is not new. It has been tried in other countries, including the United States, where such coupons were made available to victims of a hurricane that recently battered Florida.

It has also been tried in India, where poor families in areas which have had scanty rainfall received coupons that could be exchanged for rice.

It was a bit different in the town of Deva in Romania. According to a posting on the Internet, prostitutes there were accepting food coupons for services rendered.

FOOD COUPONS/ A10

WEIGHTY MATTERS
It would appear that President Arroyo has gained a few pounds. Is it about time for her to go on the South Beach Diet? But then it could be just the camera angle during prayers before a Cabinet meeting at the Palace state dining room on Tuesday.
VAL HANDUMON


SAYANG, MASKI MAY CHOLESTEROL PA YAN!

Tañada scion bats for 'pork'

By Carlito Pablo

AS A student marching in the streets, he fought for progressive causes. Now, in the halls of Congress, he has become a champion of the pork barrel, a controversial fund seen as a major source of corruption.

Neophyte Rep. Lorenzo "Erin" Tañada III (LP, Quezon) has his reasons and they seem telling enough: By abolishing pork, he contends, it is the poor who will really get hurt.

Tañada rose to the defense of the pork barrel sys-

TANADA/ A11

Much too many babies, says Flavier

By Christine O. Avendaño

FEWER babies means more food.

Senate President Pro Tempore Juan Flavier yesterday linked the growing problem of hunger in the country to rapid population growth, and criticized the Department of Health for not vigorously pushing its family planning program.

Flavier said a Social Weather Stations survey showing that 15.1 percent of Filipino households had nothing to eat at least once in the last three months underscored the "interlocking problem with the population growth of the Philippines."

"While they keep saying that

MUCH TOO/ A10

DA, producers agree to keep food prices down

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Christine Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture and food producers yesterday reached an agreement to keep farmgate prices at current levels for the next three months following a report that hunger rose to record levels in Metro Manila and Mindanao in August.

"There is no reason for retailers to increase their prices in the coming months since they are assured of the supply and farmgate prices of chicken, vegetables and processed food at least until December," Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said in an interview.

Malacañang gathered vegetable, poultry and meat producers and market vendors to a one-hour press briefing at the Premier Guesthouse to drive home the point that there was ample supply of food, including rice, vegetables, chicken and eggs in the country.

In attendance were representatives of the Philippine Association of Broiler Integrators (Pabi), United Broiler Raisers Association (Ubra), Vegetable Council, Philippine Alliance of Philippine Fishing Federation Inc., Tilapia Producers Group of Bulacan, the hog sector and the National Market Vendors Association (Namvesco).

Namvesco president Rodolfo Dalangin said five areas in Metro Manila had agreed to maintain the prices of food at present levels up to the end of the year.

These are Mandaluyong, Novaliches, Paco, Commonwealth and Malabon. Dalangin said vendors in these markets would continue to sell chicken at P100 per kilo and eggs at P3.50 apiece, for instance, up to December.

"We market vendors don't have

DA, PRODUCERS/ A10

Mahathir: Share wealth first before growing business

By Ronnel W. Domingo and TJ Burgonio

EQUITABLE distribution of wealth before business growth.

This was the formula for economic success of a country like Malaysia, according to former Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohamad, who is in Manila on a two-day visit.

Speaking at the 30th Philippine Business Conference organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mahathir said his country's success in closing the gap between the rich and the poor had spurred economic growth while minimizing class and racial tensions.

He also cited other measures to promote equity such as taxation of the rich, subsidies to the poor, control of prices of essential goods and promoting labor-intensive industries to create jobs.

He warned, however, that wages must stay competitive or workers would start to lose jobs as investments dried up.

Asked later what advice he could give the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the man who ruled Malaysia for 22 years said his country's history was an open book.

"I cannot tell other countries what to do, but they are free to [emulate us in what] can be applied to their own situations," he said.

Malaysia—a former British colony where race riots broke out in 1969 between the poorer majority Malays and the minority ethnic Chinese—has a population of less than 24 million, with each citizen having a share of the gross domestic product of $9,000. Its economy grew at about 5.2 percent in 2003.

Nine minutes into Mahathir's speech the lights went out, plunging the packed Fiesta Pavilion of the Manila Hotel in darkness and eliciting murmurs from the audience that included captains of industry and former President Fidel Ramos.

But Mahathir, who stepped down as prime minister on Oct. 31, 2003, merely smiled during the three-minute outage. Then he casually resumed his speech with no comment on the embarrassing interruption, and harped on the principle that social equity should not be sacrificed for profit.

"Achieving growth is simple if

MAHATHIR/ A11

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Central and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Southern Luzon and Visayas. The rest of Luzon will have partly cloudy to cloudy with rainshowers and thunderstorms

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/10/06/04 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Widespread Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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SC stops SSS auction of bank stake

THE SUPREME Court yesterday stopped the Social Security System from going through with the planned auction of its 29 percent equity in Equitable-PCIBank this month.

In a resolution, the high court issued a status quo order stopping the SSS from going through with its planned bidding of its shares in Equitable-PCI, the country's third largest bank, on Oct. 20, following a petition from five senators seeking to stop the sale.

The high court said that, "without giving due course" to the petition filed by the group of senators led by Sen. Sergio Osmeña, it was requiring the parties to "observe the status quo prevailing" before the SSS issued the resolutions approving the sale of the shares.

The tribunal also gave the SSS, the Social Security Commission and its members and BDO Capital and Investment Corp. 10 days to comment on the senators' petition.

Last August, the SSS announced that it had resolved to auction its Equitable-PCI stake following the failure of an earlier agreement to sell the block to the Banco de Oro Capital.

Despite the objection of BDO, which has filed a lawsuit to compel the SSS to honor the agreement, the SSS said it would subject the sale to a "Swiss challenge" or a price-test challenge which would allow the BDO to match the highest bid price during the auction.

Under the Swiss challenge, a deal is subjected to counteroffers from the public to see if the offer from the original proponent, in this case the BDO, is reasonable.

The original proponent however reserves the right to match the best bid if it wants to retain the agreement.

The senators filed a petition asking the high court to stop the bidding, saying that the Swiss challenge procedure would give gave BDO Capital preferential treatment.

Illegal

Senators Osmeña, Juan Flavier, Rodolfo Biazon, Alfredo Lim, Jamby Madrigal and private petitioners Luis and Patricia Sison that the sale of the shares was illegal since it would effectively be done without public bidding.

Allowing BDO Capital to acquire the shares through the "Swiss challenge" procedure was illegal as it was "not a mode of bidding but a mechanism for awarding government contracts on negotiated basis."

"It is a case of granting BDO Capital the privilege of purchasing the shares at its own price even if other buyers are willing to pay a higher price," Osmeña said.

Stock analysts said the SC order to stop the bidding of the SSS shares would stall potential growth for banks involved in the bid.

This spells "uncertainty" in terms of robust growth prospects in the coming years for Banco de Oro Universal Bank and Equitable-PCI, said the research head of a foreign investment house.

"It would have meant good growth for them both. For BDO, it will rapidly grow their branch network since they will bank on Equitable PCI's platform," he said.

A BDO official declined to comment since the bank has yet to get a copy of the Supreme Court order.

The bank earlier said it was reviewing whether to participate in the auction of of the SSS-held shares.

"We will study whether we will go along with the bidding or not, we are still deciding," Tessie Sy Coson, BDO chair had said earlier.

Sy was unavailable for comment yesterday.

Hint of weariness

With a hint of weariness over the recent developments in the deal, Sy said the BDO Group had not formed its game plan yet for the expected bidding of the Equitable PCI shares.

"For me, what will be, will be, I am so... I put my hands up," Sy had said.

Early this year, the SSS and Banco de Oro negotiated a deal for the sale of the Equitable PCI shares to BDO in an exclusive negotiation period that lapsed at the end of June.

The deal ran into controversy when it was opposed by various groups, including the Philippine Association of Retired Persons, and triggered a Senate investigation. But the justice department eventually allowed the state-run pension fund to go through with the sale.

BDO insisted that the agreement was legally binding and filed a suit with the Mandaluyong Regional Trial Court to compel the SSS to honor the agreement.

In the earlier agreement, BDO agreed to pay P43.50 per share, or P14 billion for the entire block of SSS' stake in Equitable PCIB. The Equitable shares closed at P44 per share in yesterday's trading at the stock market. *Philip C. Tubeza and Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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OCTOBER

01-31	Singapore JewelFest 2004: Flights of Desire
01-31	Crossroads: Collective Works of Second Generation Artists
01-31	Ju Ming 2004 Singapore-Beijing-Shanghai Asian Sculpture at its Best
01-31	MAMMA MIA!
01-31	Tan Swie Hian
01-03	Sing Song
05-07	Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
09-31	Hari Raya Light-Up
14-22	Navarathri Festival
14-31	Pilgrimage to Kusu Island
15-31	Deepavali Light-Up 2004
24	Action Asia Challenge

NOVEMBER

01	Theemidhi Festival
01-30	Fabric of the Nation exhibition
01-30	Crossroads: Collective Works of Second Generation Artists
01-30	Ju Ming 2004 Singapore-Beijing-Shanghai Asian Sculpture at its Best
01-30	MAMMA MIA!
01-30	Tan Swie Hian
01-14	Deepavali Light-Up 2004
01-14	godeatgod
06-15	Disney Live! Winnie the Pooh and the Perfect Day
11-12	Dances of the Orient
11	Deepavali
13-21	Singapore International Buskers Festival
13-30	Christmas in the Tropics 2004
14	Hari Raya Puasa
15-21	Singapore Badminton Open
16-21	The Little Match Girl
20-21	Singapore River Regatta
20-30	Rumpelstiltskin
23-30	Sesame Street Live Everyone Makes Music
25	BONEY'M LIVE 2004
26-30	Warisan Kita Festival
26-30	Nickelodeon's Christmas by the Bay
26-30	Family Festival
27	Kavyarasa

DECEMBER

01-31	Fabric of the Nation exhibition
01-31	Crossroads: Collective Works of Second Generation Artists
01-31	Ju Ming 2004 Singapore-Beijing-Shanghai Asian Sculpture at its Best
01-31	MAMMA MIA!
01-31	Christmas in the Tropics 2004
01-03	Sesame Street Live Everyone Makes Music
01-04	Warisan Kita Festival
01-05	Family Festival
01-09	Nickelodeon's Christmas by the Bay
01-12	Rumpelstiltskin
01-19	Tan Swie Hian
05-12	40th AMF Bowling World Cup
05	Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon
08-31	Botero in Singapore 2004/05
10-26	European Flying Circus
31	Party On Singapore!

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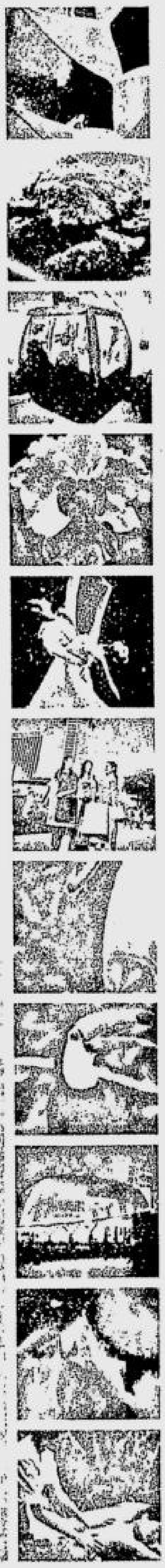

Solon says 49 GOCCs to lose ₱131B this year

By Carlito Pablo

FORTY-NINE government-owned and -controlled corporations will post a combined net loss of P131.16 billion for 2004, according to the chair of the committee on appropriations of the House of Representatives.

"The leading usual suspect is of course the National Power Corp. with a projected net loss of P114.2 billion," said Rep. Rolando Andaya (Liberal Party, Camarines Sur).

To keep them afloat, the cash-strapped and deficit-ridden national government will have to provide P13.7 billion in subsidies this year, Andaya said.

Andaya did not provide a listing of the 49 losing GOCCs but said that seven of the 15 GOCCs earlier told by Malacañang to shape up or face the chopping block are included in the list.

Specialty hospitals

"Although it can be argued that GOCCs imbued with a social welfare function are expected to lose money by the nature of their mandate, as in the case of specialty hospitals, that defense is not applicable in all cases," Andaya said.

He noted that one such agency, the National Food Authority whose main function is to ensure food security, will almost double its losses from P7.585 billion in 2003 to P14.552 billion in 2004.

The rest of the seven and their projected losses are: Light Rail Transit Authority, P1.882 billion; Philippine National Oil Co., P1.409 billion; National Home Mortgage and Finance Corp., P2.692 billion; Technology and Livelihood Resource Center, P522 million; National Tobacco Administration, P216.4 million; and the Philippine Television Network Inc., P2.7 million.

Boncodin's warning

Andaya said that five of the 15 GOCCs that Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin had earlier warned to shape up might actually end up posting profits this year.

These were the National Irrigation Administration, Philippine Crop Insurance Corp., National Development Co., Philippine Coconut Authority and the National Housing Authority.

The remaining three of the 15 GOCCs did not have any figures about their income projections, Andaya said.

These are the Al-Amanah Islamic Investment Bank Phil., Philippine National Railways and the Human Settlements Development Corp.

Andaya said that Malacañang should have expanded the list of 15 losing state firms to 21 to include six government agencies that incurred huge losses in 2003 and expect to chalk up even more losses in 2004.

Charitable

"As usual, the affable Ms Boncodin was charitable. She held her punches," Andaya said.

The firms concerned are: the Philippine Conventions and Visitors Corp., P69.5 million in 2003, P64.5 million for 2004; Sugar Regulatory Administration, P74 million in 2003, P59.5 million for 2004; Cultural Center of the Philippines, P201.6 million in 2003, P279.6 million for 2004; Bases Conversion Development Authority, P420 million in 2003, P71 million for 2004; National Dairy Authority, P59.3 million in 2003, P67.8 million for 2004; and the National Electrification Administration, P6.44 billion in 2003, P1.77 billion for 2004.

Meanwhile, the National Irrigation Administration yesterday disputed reports that it was incurring heavy losses.

'Paper loss'

In a press statement, NIA administrator Jesus Emmanuel M. Paras said that while it was true that the agency posted a net loss of P423 million in 2003, it was purely a "paper loss."

In accounting terms, the losses, as reflected in the consolidated income of the agency, consisted mainly of the yearly allowance for bad debts and depreciation expense on capital assets like irrigation facilities for which there is no cost-recovery mechanism, the statement explained.

Paras pointed out that unlike Napocor and other state utilities, the NIA does not charge its end users, the farmers, for water from the irrigation systems that it has constructed through the years.

The only money that the NIA collects from farmers is the irrigation service fee which covers only the maintenance and operating expenses of these irrigation facilities, he said.

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Outstanding women picked

FORENSIC pathologist and 'spokesman for the dead' Dr. Raquel del Rosario-Fortun, and popular radio-TV journalist Ces Oreña-Drilon lead this year's The Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service (TOWNS) awardees who were presented to the media at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City yesterday.

Now on its 30th year, the TOWNS awards also include industrial engineer Aura Castillo Matias, scientist Madonna Carbon Casimiro, teachers Deanie Lyn Ocampo and Blesilda Perez Raposa, poet Josephine Barrios, movie actress and environmentalist Chin-Chin Gutierrez,

Journalist Cathy Guballa, activist lawyer, Marichu Lambino, fashion designer Ditas Ong and business executive and president of the Philippine Stock Exchange Alicia Rita Morales-Arroyo.

The TOWNS awards will be given during ceremonies in Malacañang on Oct. 28, with President Macapagal-Arroyo gracing the affair.

Rich general in RP but can't be found

By Alcuin Papa

THE ARMED Forces of the Philippines yesterday assured the public that Maj. Gen. Carlos F. Garcia was still in the country and would be made to face charges before the Ombudsman.

AFP Public Information Office chief Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero made the assurance yesterday as he told reporters that some groups outside the military were out to use the Garcia case "for political reasons."

The AFP said Monday it had suspended Garcia per request of the Ombudsman for his failure to declare all his assets in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN). The Ombudsman also said the increase in Garcia's net worth was disproportionate to his legitimate income. As a two-star general, Garcia's salary is P36,015 a month.

"He (Garcia) is still in the country, he has not left. We are confident he will face the charges against him," Lucero said.

The INQUIRER went to Garcia's house in Camp Aguinaldo to get his side but a carpenter working in the garage said no one was home. Calls to Garcia's cell phone were answered by a recording. Yesterday was the second day the media had tried to seek out the general.

Lucero said the last time the AFP heard from Garcia was Sunday. He did not elaborate.

On Sept. 28, the Ombudsman ordered the AFP to place Garcia under "preventive suspension for a period of six months without pay" on charges of dishonesty, gross misconduct and "conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service." The Ombudsman gave Garcia 10 days to answer the charges.

Lucero warned the controversy could spark more talk of destabilization inside and outside the military.

"We know for a fact there will be some groups who will use this for political reasons. We are anticipating this. Based on our experience, it is not far-fetched that dubious groups might exploit this."

He said the AFP was explaining the Garcia case to the troops in the field as "an initiative meant to reform the Armed Forces."

During the Oakwood mutiny last year, rebel soldiers calling themselves the Magdalo group had denounced corruption in the military. Only two weeks ago, the leaders of the soldiers apologized to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Class of '71

Garcia, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class '71, was named AFP comptroller (J6) on March 10, 2001. The J6 is the treasurer of the AFP and handles its budget and finances. He was relieved on March 10, 2004, and transferred to Plans and Programs (J5).

Sometime in February, the office of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya received a report that one of Garcia's sons was held at the San Francisco airport in the US for failing to declare $100,000 that he was carrying.

In an attempt to explain the origins of the money, Garcia's wife Clarita admitted her husband "receives travel money and expenses in excess of thousands of dollars" and that she often traveled with him with shopping money amounting to more than $10,000.

Mrs. Garcia was likewise reported to have stated in an affidavit that her husband also received cash for travels and expenses from European and Asian companies that had been awarded contracts for military hardware.

He also received gifts and "gratitude" money from Philippine companies that were awarded military contracts to build roads, bridges and military housing, she said.

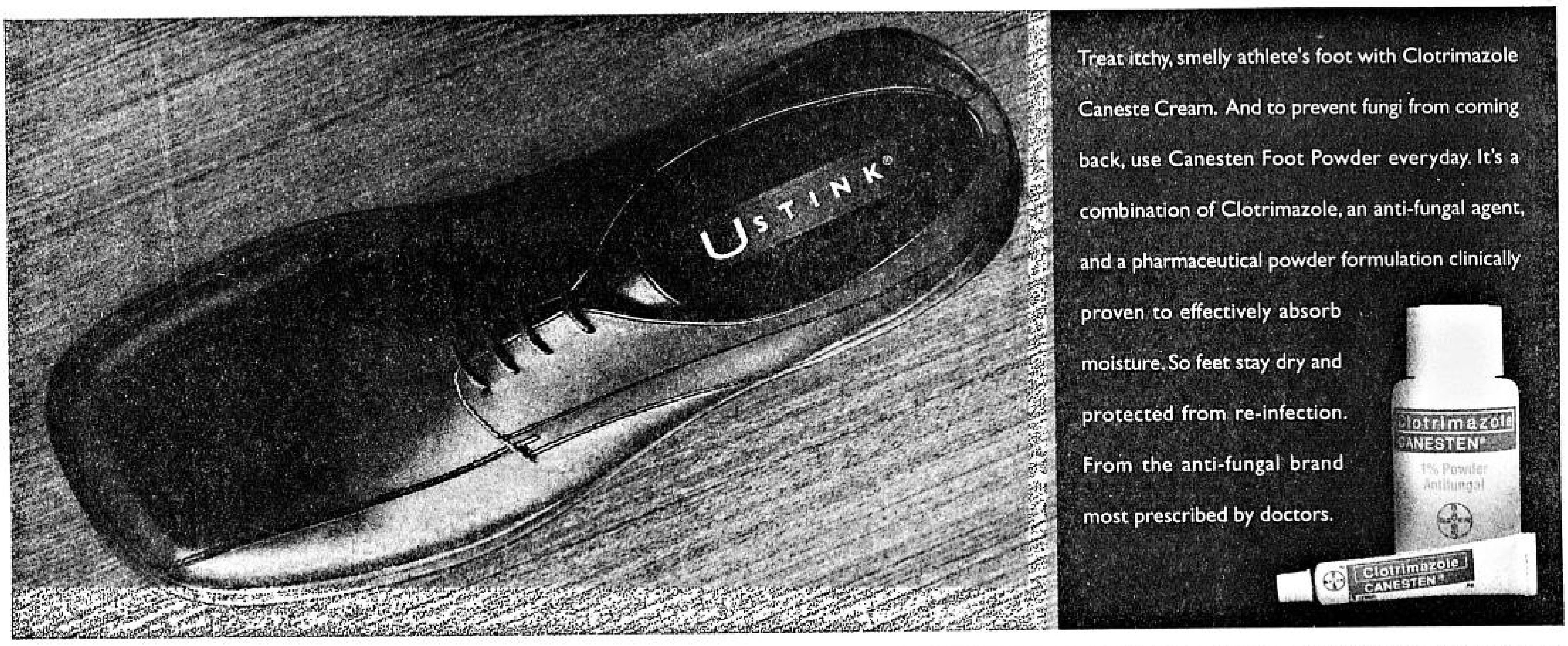
Abaya, Garcia's classmate at the PMA, immediately ordered the Office of Ethical Standards and Public Accountability (OESPA) headed by another classmate, Vice Admiral Ariston de los Reyes, to investigate Garcia.

Rep. Roilo Golez (Lakas, 2nd Dist., Parañaque City) filed a resolution seeking a congressional inquiry into the matter.

Rep. Prospero Pichay (Lakas, 1st Dist., Surigao del Sur) said Mrs. Garcia's revelations to the US authorities were enough evidence for the filing of plunder and graft cases against her husband.

"Suspension is not enough. He should be criminally charged," Pichay said.

With Cynthia D. Balana



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By Alcuin Papa

THE ARMED Forces of the Philippines yesterday assured the public that Maj. Gen. Carlos F. Garcia was still in the country and would be made to face charges before the Ombudsman.

AFP Public Information Office chief Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero made the assurance yesterday as he told reporters that some groups outside the military were out to use the Garcia case "for political reasons."

The AFP said Monday it had suspended Garcia per request of the Ombudsman for his failure to declare all his assets in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN). The Ombudsman also said the increase in Garcia's net worth was disproportionate to his legitimate income. As a two-star general, Garcia's salary is P36,015 a month.

"He (Garcia) is still in the country, he has not left. We are confident he will face the charges against him," Lucero said.

The INQUIRER went to Garcia's house in Camp Aguinaldo to get his side but a carpenter working in the garage said no one was home. Calls to Garcia's cell phone were answered by a recording. Yesterday was the second day the media had tried to seek out the general.

Lucero said the last time the AFP heard from Garcia was Sunday. He did not elaborate.

On Sept. 28, the Ombudsman ordered the AFP to place Garcia under "preventive suspension for a period of six months without pay" on charges of dishonesty, gross misconduct and "conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service." The Ombudsman gave Garcia 10 days to answer the charges.

Lucero warned the controversy could spark more talk of destabilization inside and outside the military.

"We know for a fact there will be some groups who will use this for political reasons. We are anticipating this. Based on our experience, it is not far-fetched that dubious groups might exploit this."

He said the AFP was explaining the Garcia case to the troops in the field as "an initiative meant to reform the Armed Forces."

During the Oakwood mutiny last year, rebel soldiers calling themselves the Magdalo group had denounced corruption in the military. Only two weeks ago, the leaders of the soldiers apologized to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Class of '71

Garcia, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class '71, was named AFP comptroller (J6) on March 10, 2001. The J6 is the treasurer of the AFP and handles its budget and finances. He was relieved on March 10, 2004, and transferred to Plans and Programs (J5).

Sometime in February, the office of AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya received a report that one of Garcia's sons was held at the San Francisco airport in the US for failing to declare $100,000 that he was carrying.

In an attempt to explain the origins of the money, Garcia's wife Clarita admitted her husband "receives travel money and expenses in excess of thousands of dollars" and that she often traveled with him with shopping money amounting to more than $10,000.

Mrs. Garcia was likewise reported to have stated in an affidavit that her husband also received cash for travels and expenses from European and Asian companies that had been awarded contracts for military hardware.

He also received gifts and "gratitude" money from Philippine companies that were awarded military contracts to build roads, bridges and military housing, she said.

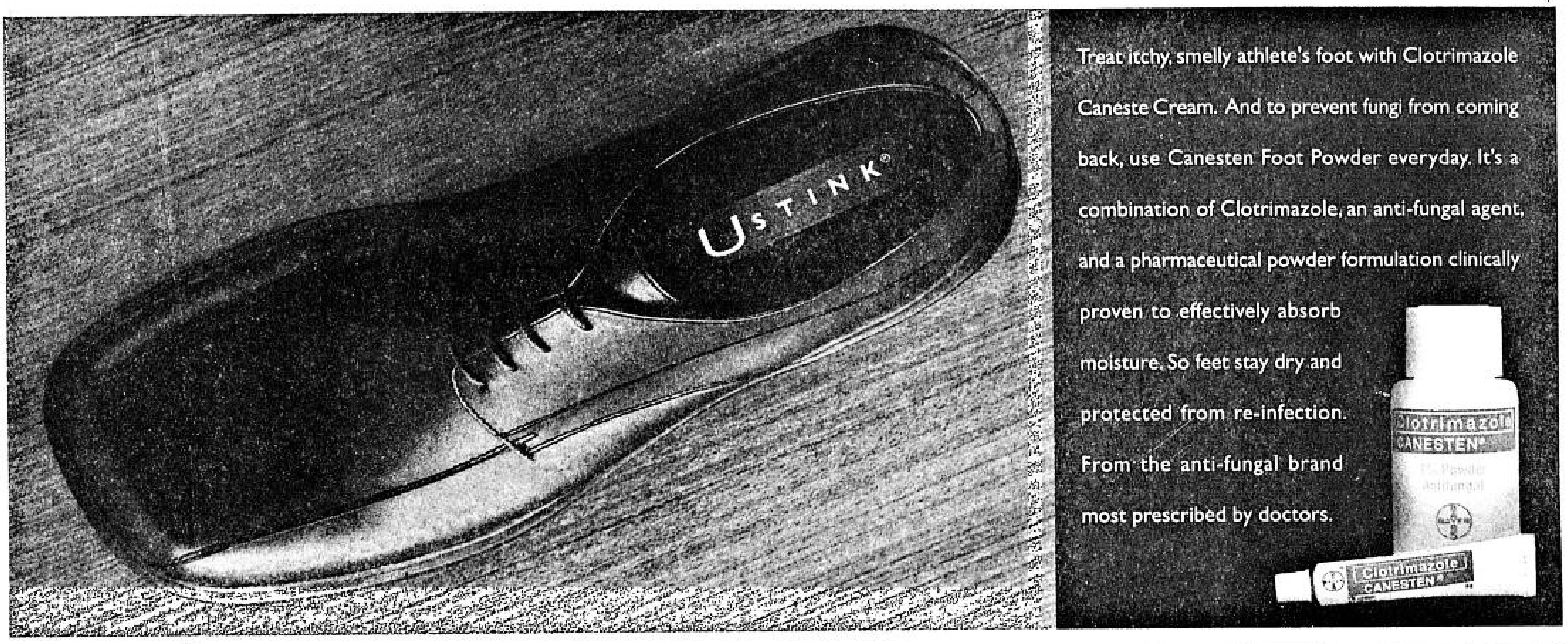
Abaya, Garcia's classmate at the PMA, immediately ordered the Office of Ethical Standards and Public Accountability (OESPA) headed by another classmate, Vice Admiral Ariston de los Reyes, to investigate Garcia.

Rep. Roilo Golez (Lakas, 2nd Dist., Parañaque City) filed a resolution seeking a congressional inquiry into the matter.

Rep. Prospero Pichay (Lakas, 1st Dist., Surigao del Sur) said Mrs. Garcia's revelations to the US authorities were enough evidence for the filing of plunder and graft cases against her husband.

"Suspension is not enough. He should be criminally charged," Pichay said.

With Cynthia D. Balana



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AFP says it's ready to thwart NPA offensive

By Alcuin Papa

THE ARMED Forces of the Philippines said yesterday it was ready to face the threat of increased attacks by the New People's Army after the Communist Party of the Philippines ordered its armed wing to step up offensives against military and police targets.

"The Armed Forces is capable of preventing the NPA from stepping up their attacks. We are taking the battle directly to them. We will not wait for any threats," said AFP Public Information Office chief Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero.

He added: "We are prepared and we have trained our people enough. We have sufficient armaments and training."

Lucero also said the military had scored significant successes against the communist rebels in recent weeks.

"If we are to look at the recent incidents ... we have achieved a lot of tactical victories," he said.

In a statement the other day, CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said the NPA had been ordered to launch bigger and more frequent "tactical offensives" against government forces whenever the opportunity presented itself, "to accelerate the overthrow" of the government.

The United States and the European Union had branded the CPP and the NPA as terrorist organizations. This led to the cutting off of funds from sympathizers and the freezing of the insurgents' assets.

The terrorist tag was one of the reasons the peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front, the umbrella organization of the CPP and NPA, were scuttled. The NDF had demanded the removal of the terrorist tag as a condition for the resumption of the negotiations.

President Macapagal-Arroyo on Tuesday blamed communist and Muslim separatist insurgencies and the high jobless rate for hunger and poverty in the Philippines.

"We cannot shut our eyes to the truth of hunger and poverty. The immediate causes are unemployment in the cities, and pockets of conflict in the countryside," she said in a written statement.

The conflicts were highlighted by fierce clashes between government troops and communist rebels over the past week that left at least 19 people dead and several others wounded, as the 35-year-old insurgency appeared to be heating up, The Associated Press reported.

In the largest number of casualties, the army said eight NPA guerrillas were killed in an encounter Saturday outside Peñaranda town in Nueva Ecija.

The soldiers, who suffered no casualties, recovered an assault rifle, ammunition, cellular phones and bloodied sacks believed to have been used as stretchers for wounded rebels, army spokesperson Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual said.

In the fighting Sunday, soldiers clashed with about 10 guerrillas in Compostela Valley province, killing three rebels. Three other guerrillas were captured and soldiers recovered four rifles, two grenade launchers and Claymore mines. There were no troop casualties.

On Friday, guerrillas killed four policemen on their way to a market in Davao Oriental, east of Compostela Valley. On the same day, soldiers and police captured three guerrillas in Pampanga.

The previous day, two soldiers were killed in a fire-fight with guerrillas in Cagayan province, while one civilian was killed and four soldiers were wounded in another clash with rebels in Palawan.

A day earlier, a gun battle between the NPA and the military in Apalit, Pampanga, left one guerrilla dead.

The rural-based Marxist rebellion by the guerrillas is one of Asia's longest-running insurrections and is considered the Philippines' most serious security threat.

Rosal on Monday warned of more attacks.

He said a three-year plan approved by the CPP's central committee last year aimed to double the strength of each regular combat unit in the provinces from 25 to 50 members through recruitment.

He didn't give exact figures of the guerrillas' current strength, but the military estimated they number 8,500 with 6,200 firearms after hitting a peak of about 25,000 rebels in the mid-1980s. *With AP, AFP*

Correction

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a front-page story—Rio's last wish: Bibles for friends, relatives in wake—misstated the name of the US hospital where Rio Diaz died. She died at Daly City's Seton Medical Center—not Seaton Hospital. The medical center is named after St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, who founded the Daughters of Charity in America.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

IKAW AT ANG SSS

Questions & Answers on Social Security

New guidelines on Salary Loans Granting

The Social Security Commission, under Resolution No. 669 dated 10 December 2003, approved the revised guidelines on salary loans granting.

Who may qualify for a salary loan under the new guidelines?

An employed, currently paying self-employed or voluntary member (SE/VM) who has **6** posted monthly contributions for the last **12** months prior to the month of filing of application are eligible to file for a salary loan. For a one-month loan, the member-borrower must have **36** posted monthly contributions prior to the month of filing of application. For a two-month loan, the member-borrower must have **72** posted monthly contributions prior to the month of filing of application.

What are the requirements?

For an employed member-borrower, his employer must be updated in contributions and loan remittances. The member-borrower must be updated/current in his other member loans such as educational, stock investment, MADE and housing loans granted under the Unified Housing Loan Program (UHLP) or direct from SSS; has not been granted final benefit (total permanent disability, retirement and death); not more than sixty (60) years of age at the time of application; and he has not been disqualified due to fraud committed against the SSS.

How much is the loanable amount?

A one-month salary loan is equivalent to the average of the member's latest 12 monthly salary credits posted. A two-month salary loan is equivalent to twice the average of the member's latest 12 monthly salary credits posted (rounded to the next higher monthly salary credit), but not to exceed P24,000.

How much is the interest charged on a salary loan?

The loan shall be charged a nominal interest of 10 per cent per annum. First year's interest shall be deducted in advance from the proceeds of the loan. Second year's interest shall be included in the monthly amortizations. A service fee of 1% of the loan amount shall be charged and deducted from the proceeds of the loan.

In case a loan is not paid, how much is the penalty interest?

Loan amortization not remitted on due date shall bear a penalty of 1 per cent a month.

How long will it take the member to pay back the loan and how does he pay?

The loan is payable within two years in 24 equal monthly installments. For employed member-borrowers, the first deduction from their salaries shall start on the second month following the date of loan. All remittances shall be made on or before the 10th day following the applicable month of deduction to the SSS or to any of its authorized banks. The employee is obliged to report to the new employer his obligations with SSS and shall allow the new employer to deduct from his salary the corresponding amortizations due, plus any penalty for late remittance of amortizations.

For self-employed or voluntary paying member-borrowers, the first amortization shall be paid to the SSS or any of its authorized banks on or before the 10th day of the third month following the date of loan.

What is the reponsibility of the employer?

The employer shall be responsible for the collection and remittance to the SSS of the amortization(s) due on the member-borrower's salary loan through payroll deduction. The employer shall require new employees to secure from the SSS an updated statement of account. The new employer shall continue the deduction and shall be accountable for remittance to the SSS.

In case of retirement or resignation, termination of employment, how can a borrower pay back his loan?

In case of retirement or resignation, termination of employment or cessation of operations of the company, the employer shall be required to deduct the total balance of the loan from any benefit(s) due to the employee and shall remit the same in full to SSS. If the benefit(s) due the employee or the amount thereof legally available for offset of obligations of the employee is insufficient to fully repay the loan, the employer shall report the unpaid loan balance to SSS.

What happens to the unpaid loan in case of member-borrower's death, total disability or retirement?

In case of member-borrower's death, total disability or retirement under the Social Security Act, the entire amount or any unpaid amount of the loan as well as the interest and penalty thereon, if any, shall be deducted from the corresponding benefit.

When can a member renew his salary loan with the SSS?

The loan may be renewed after the prescribed amortization period of two (2) years. Balance of P500 or less shall be deducted from the proceeds of the new loan.

Where can a borrower file his/her salary loan application?

A borrower may file his/her salary loan application (SSS Form ISL-101-Member Loan Application Revised March 2004) and present his/her digitized SSS ID card at the nearest SSS branch or representative office.

For more information visit the SSS office nearest you or call 920-6446 upto 55 or e-mail at member_relations@sss.gov.ph,

Kabalikat mo sa buhay!

Fax to: 924-3465 or 435-9835 or Mail to: Member Relations Dept., Social Security System, East Avenue, Quezon City

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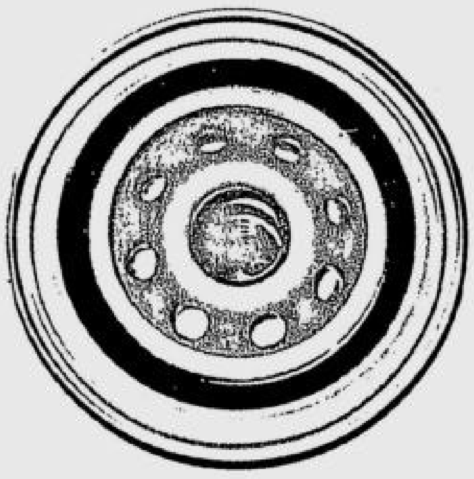

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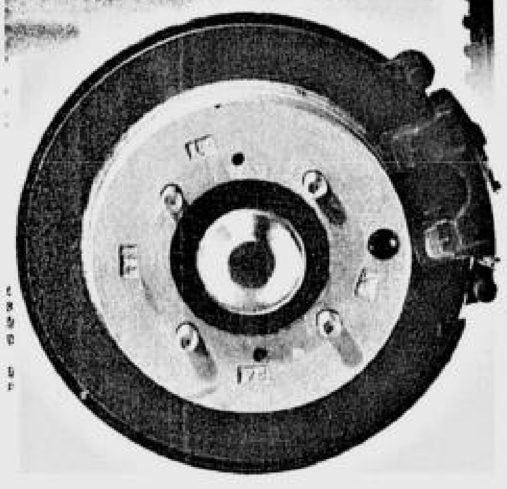

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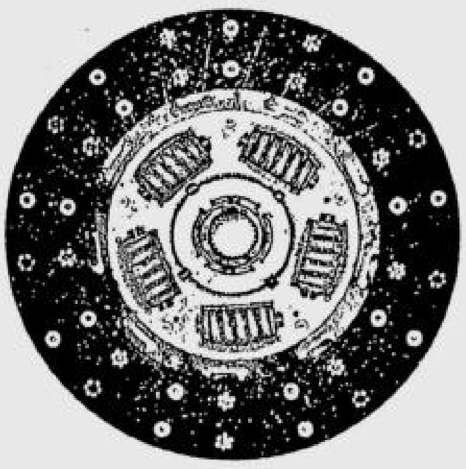

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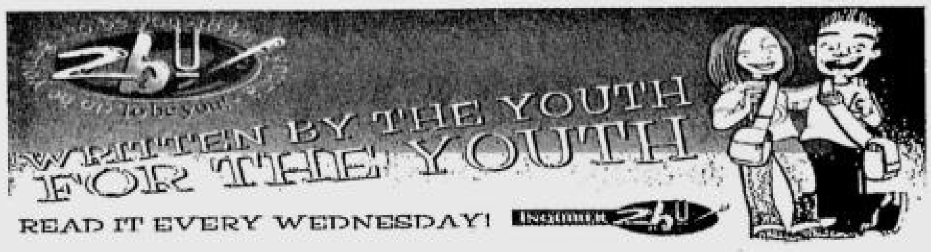
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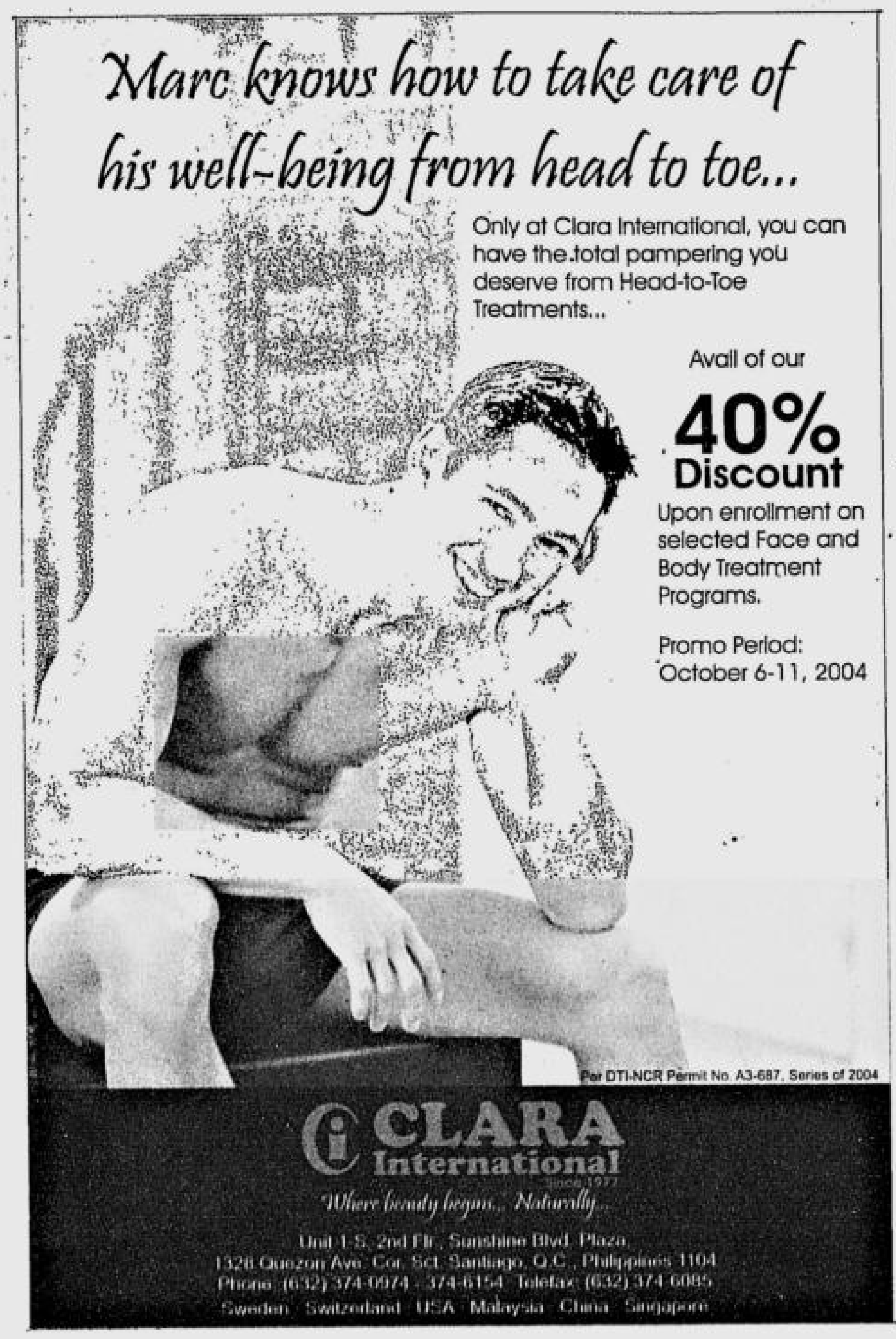
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NARAA STAND ON THE MAGDALO APOLOGY

THE NATIONAL ROTC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, INCORPORATED (NARAA) THAT COMPOSE SEVENTY FIVE PERCENT (75%) OF THE AFP OFFICERS CORPS', INCLUDING ITS RESERVIST AND RETIREE MEMBERS, HEREBY EXPRESSES ITS POSITION ON THE PUBLISHED APOLOGY OF THE MAGDALO MUTINEERS OF JULY 27, 2003 AS FOLLOWS:

IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THE APOLOGY OF THE MAGDALO MUTINEERS ACCEPTED BY THE PRESIDENT IS A SINCERE ACT OF CONTRITION THAT WILL HOPEFULLY LEAD TO THE HEALING OF SOME OF THE NATION'S WOUNDS;

THE APOLOGY IS NOT HOWEVER A LICENSE TO ERASE THEIR CASES IN THE BAR OF LAW;

APOLOGY OR NO APOLOGY, THE CASES AGAINST THE MAGDALO MUTINEERS MUST BE PURSUED TO SECURE THE INTEGRITY OF OUR JUDICIAL PROCESSES AND THE RULE OF LAW;

THE DECISION WHETHER TO GRANT AMNESTY OR PARDON TO THE MAGDALO MUTINEERS SHOULD COME ONLY AFTER THE COURT HAS RULED ON THEIR CASES;

WE STRONGLY PROTEST THE CONSIGNMENT OF THE MAGDALO CASE AS ANOTHER MILITARY MISADVENTURE THAT WILL REST IN OBLIVION BY VIRTUE OF AN APOLOGY;

WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE LAW SHOULD RUN ITS DUE COURSE WITH REGARD THE MAGDALO CASE IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE EMERGENCE OF A CULTURE OF ADVENTURISM IN THE FRACTIOUS SIDE OF THE MILITARY.

WILLIAM K HOTCHKISS III
LTGEN (Ret)
Chairman, NARAA Inc

AMADO A SANGLAY
COMMO (Ret)
President, NARAAPN-Chapter

ROBERT C GERVACIO
BGEN (Ret)
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LEONARDO P ENRIQUEZ
COL. (Ret)
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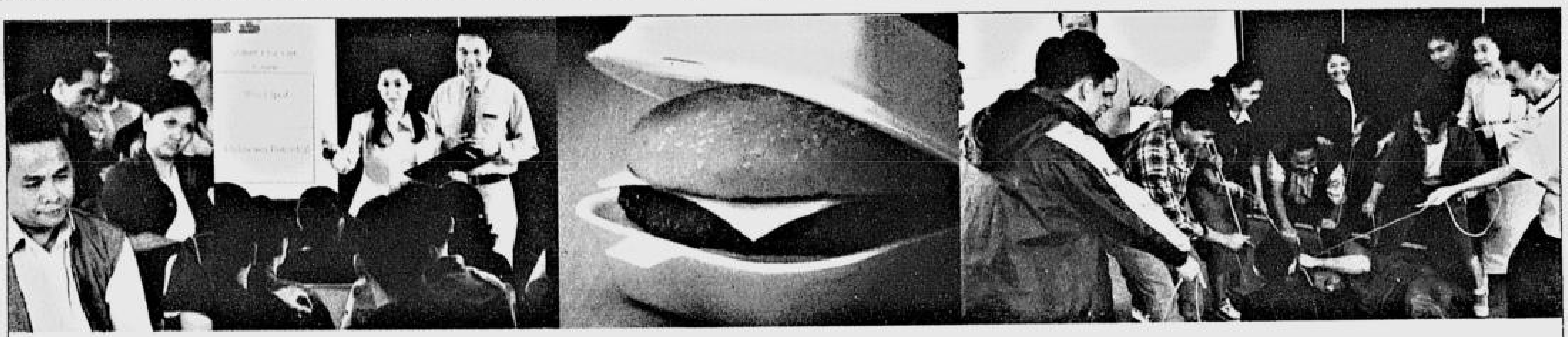

The bus line and the bankers

(Plus, a few words on the educational qualities of merienda)

Mr. Lejano sat jaded and impatient in the corner. With him, fifty hard-nosed veteran bus drivers, conductors, and ticket inspectors. They normally spent their days inside tons of diesel-propelled metal, crawling through the traffic-fume laden streets of the metropolis. None of them relished the idea of being gathered together that day for, of all things, a seminar.

But orders were orders. And not being inclined to disobey, Mr. Lejano and his companions settled for grudging compliance instead.

It was around this point that we stepped into the room.

We were a team of trainers from iBank's Center for Learning. Our days were spent giving talks to bank executives, preparing training programs, and other developmental activities. Common ground, at that moment, was as rare as an empty seat on an MRT train during rush hour.

Prior to this moment, the only words we had ever shared with bus drivers like Mr. Lejano were "Para po sa tabi!" or "Manong bayad po" or perhaps at most "Pakibaba po ako sa Crossing."

But our client, the owner of the bus line, asked us if we could help train his people. If we could smooth out the rough edges in their work attitude, help them work as a team and deliver better service. We were to help them see their job as something more than a means to make money. In a day, we were expected to make them fall in love with their work.

We resorted to what we considered our top secret ice breaker: snack packs.

Nothing fancy, truth be told. Sandwiches, chips, biscuits, fruit juice.

But sip by sip and crumb by crumb, the room began to warm up.

What they had all assumed would be a lecture was instead a dialogue. It didn't take us long to understand the frustration brought about by frivolous traffic ordinances and a daily diet of carbon monoxide. For their part, they saw how commuters would be rightfully indignant if a bus swerved irreverently in pursuit of more passengers.

The day progressed and through our battery of activities and exercises (and lunch of course!), they went from not caring whose toes they stepped on, to slipping into others' shoes. They weren't griping about problems. They were exploring solutions.

The session drew to a close, but not their enthusiasm. They eagerly posed for pictures, thanked us for our time, and looked forward to the next day.

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Beleaguered GSIS chief gets GMA benefit of the doubt

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is giving Government Service and Insurance System president and general manager Winston Garcia "the benefit of the doubt" despite calls for his ouster and the protest action mounted by GSIS employees and militant groups outside the state pension fund's Pasay City headquarters.

This was disclosed yesterday by Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye who cautioned the protesters to remain sober and follow civil service rules by holding their rallies only after office hours.

"The President has not made any decision at this time (on Garcia's fate), at least not at this time. But it's fair to say the President is giving him the benefit of the doubt," Bunye said.

He said the President's appointees were chosen and retained mainly because of "her trust and confidence in them and their ability to perform the mandate of their offices."

A major protest rally staged by GSIS workers and militant groups entered its second day yesterday as they continued to press President Arroyo to replace Garcia for alleged mismanagement and abuse of power.

When asked if the protest action was proof of the workers' dissatisfaction with Garcia, Bunye said: "The President is concerned; she is listening to both sides."

Bunye did not say when the President would act on the GSIS workers' complaints against Garcia. "We'll find out soon enough the specific time frame. She has not given any indication on what action will be taken as far as this case is concerned," he said.

On the protest action that has disrupted services at the GSIS, Bunye told the demonstrating workers to "make sure all their actions are within the bounds of the law."

"We are not preventing them from expressing their views, but we have civil service rules that state you cannot do this during office hours," Bunye said.

He also appealed to the protesters to "try to hear all sides and be objective in judging the situation."

Malacañang is perceived to be coddling Garcia mainly because of his family's role in helping the President clinch a decisive victory in vote-rich Cebu in the May elections.

Garcia's detractors have charged him with, among other things, using the GSIS as a milking cow, specifically for the P2-million car loan and the P11-million housing loan he obtained in a matter of hours and days, respectively; granting the e-Card business to Union Bank of the Philippines instead of Land Bank of the Philippines, a government bank, and the loss of several paintings owned by the GSIS.

In Cebu City, the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) called for a fair investigation into the allegations raised against Garcia.

CCCI president Robert Go said this was the general sentiment of the members.

Go suggested the investigation be conducted by the Ombudsman so that it would be not be tainted by political color or discrimination.

He also urged Garcia's detractors to judge him on the basis of his performance at the GSIS and not on his being a Cebuano.

Garcia met with CCCI members on Monday to give his side of the controversy and to report on his performance at the GSIS. His only request was that he be given a fair hearing.

Go said Garcia told them about the reforms he had initiated at the GSIS—its computerization, the introduction of the e-Card and the reinsurance policy that saved half a billion pesos for the government, among other things.

Go said Garcia should remain at the GSIS until his guilt was proven.

As Charlie sobs, Rio is cremated

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—He had stayed calm when his wife, Rio Diaz, died on Monday. But Negros Occidental Rep. Carlos "Charlie" Cojuangco broke down when her remains were cremated yesterday morning in San Francisco, California.

According to Rio's sister, Georgie Diaz-Baillet, Charlie sobbed as the tray bearing the body was pushed into the furnace. Seeing this, Georgie said, the six Diaz siblings who were there wept, too.

Charlie was holding Rio's hand when she breathed her last at Seton Hospital in Daly City, about 7:15 a.m. (Philippine time). Quoting a sister, Georgie said Rio coughed one final time, and was still. "Charlie then asked [everyone] to make a circle then he prayed for the Lord to welcome Rio," she said.

The Diaz siblings in the room were Ruby, Aurora, Coroy, Didit, Isabel and Ramon. Also present were Charlie's brother, Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco and his wife Kimi.

Georgie said she and another sister, Gloria, had returned to Manila on Saturday.

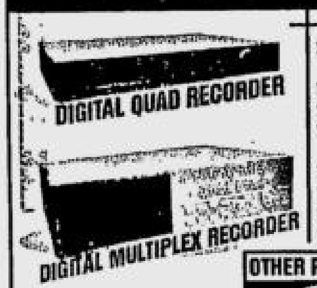
"Charlie [was] an incredible husband to Rio," Georgie told the INQUIRER. "He [demonstrated] what it meant to be with one's spouse in sickness and in health. He stayed with her all the time and administered her medication. He knew all the details."

Rejoicing

Yesterday, Charlie released a statement asking Rio's fr[illegible] "Say a prayer of thanks and praise to the Lord for He has mercifully ended the suffering of His child, Rio. Rejoice, she is with Him in heaven."

Charlie will arrive in Manila on Sunday morning with Rio's ashes. A wake will be held at the Sanctuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park. On Monday, a service will be held at Christ's Commission Fellowship in Manila. Rio was a Born Again Christian. The next day, her ashes will be brought to the St. Michael's Church in Pontevedra town, 48 km south of Bacolod. Finally, the ashes will be placed in a crypt at the Cojuangco family chapel in Hacienda Balbina, Pontevedra.

Georgie said she was in Seton on Saturday when Rio, who almost died the night before, sat up and asked to speak by phone with Ali, her 21-year-old son, who was in the Philippines.



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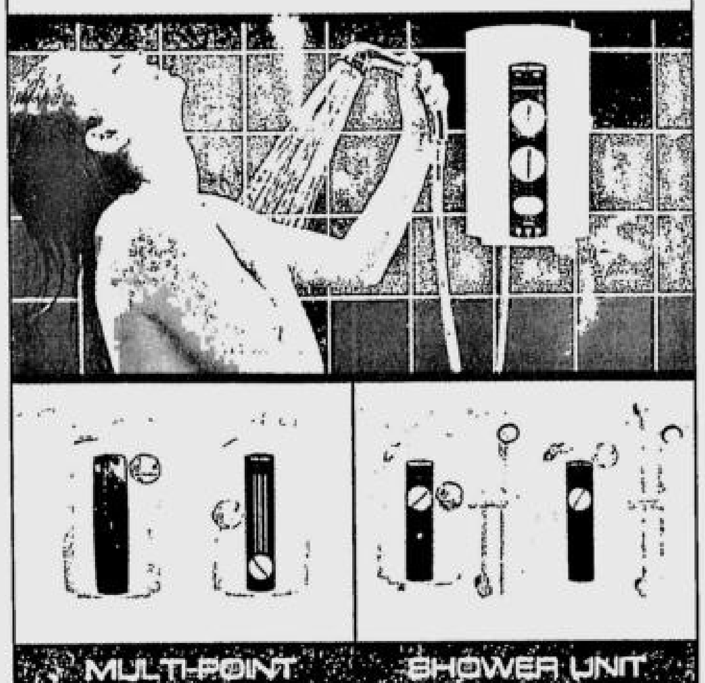

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Piatco bars government team from inspecting Naia 3

From page A1

ing the premises and inspecting Naia Terminal 3 yesterday morning.

Ermita deplored being "locked out" as he said that President Macapagal-Arroyo, consistent with the national interest, was determined to open Naia Terminal 3 to the public.

"But today, the Republic has been locked out of Terminal 3—a building that stands on government land. MIAA (Manila International Airport Authority) has been refused the as-built drawings and detailed engineering designs. It has been refused access to the bill of particulars, including records of equipment installed," Ermita said in a press statement.

But Piatco vice president and spokesperson Moises Tolentino said the government could not conduct an inspection on such short notice.

"They were not allowed entry because there was not enough time to prepare for it. We have to energize the system. We spend half a million pesos a day for electricity alone so we cannot accommodate them on such a short notice," said the Piatco official.

Arbitration case

Alfonso Cusi, MIAA general manager, was given another excuse. "We were advised by Piatco yesterday that they can't allow us to get in because it might jeopardize their arbitration case," he said.

To recover its costs, Piatco filed an arbitration case with the Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce and hearings have started in Singapore. Piatco is asking for compensation of about $535 million.

In the ongoing arbitration case, the Arroyo administration said there were defects in the construction of Naia 3. It had asked the arbitration tribunal permission to inspect the terminal but the request was denied.

The Arroyo administration had offered to pay Piatco $350 million so it could operate the new Naia terminal after the Supreme Court nullified Piatco's contract with the government last year. But Piatco had refused the offer, saying it was not enough to cover its costs. Due to the impasse, the new airport terminal was mothballed indefinitely.

Piatco's German partner Fraport AG filed a similar arbitration case with the World Bank's International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes. The German firm is seeking reimbursement of its $425 million investment in the terminal project.

ERMITA: The republic has been locked out of Terminal 3, a terminal that stands on government land.

Yesterday's incident happened a week after Piatco invited airline representatives and lawmakers to inspect the airport.

Cusi said the Arroyo administration would like to see if the new yet idle terminal would pass safety and security standards.

Security concerns

In his statement, Ermita said: "We need experts to tell us whether we are not placing any Filipino life at risk. This risk includes serious concerns whether Terminal 3 will pass tight security requirements."

Ermita also said that the terminal was built with a mall accessible to the public, and "the vulnerability of the area to infiltration by terrorist elements is a matter that will be closely scrutinized by all international aviation and security authorities."

Ermita stressed the Philippines was at the forefront of the anti-terrorism campaign. He said it could not allow the operation of a terminal "that will put people's lives at risk, whether through faulty design and construction, or vulnerability to terrorist attacks."

Ermita also said that the safety of passengers and those working at the airport was a paramount consideration in the government decision to open the terminal

'42 defects'

"The government wanted to see if the facility is safe and secure considering that there are reportedly 42 or so defects in its construction. The government wanted to explore its options," said Cusi.

He refused to say, however, whether the inspection meant the government was working out a compromise with Piatco so the new airport could be utilized.

Cusi said Piatco had given the government the green light on Friday to inspect Naia 3. But the access was withdrawn Friday night. Cusi said there was a miscue and the team of Mendoza still convened yesterday to inspect the airport terminal.

Piatco opened Naia 3 to airline representatives and some lawmakers on Sept. 29.

Still hoping

Piatco treasurer Jefferson Cheng said the company was still hoping the government would allow it to operate the terminal.

"We are hopeful that the government will cooperate with us. It will be a good sign for the country if this terminal could be operational soon. This project was mothballed for more than a year and a half but in three months time, we can be operational again as soon as we are allowed," said Cheng last week.

Ownership

Piatco is 60 percent owned by the Cheng family, 30 percent by Fraport and 10 percent by Nisho Iwai Corp. of Japan. The company said it would have to pay $350 million to Takenaka International Corp., a Japan-based contractor tapped to build the facility.

Ermita said the aborted visit to the terminal would have demonstrated to "our people that the Republic has not closed its mind to the opening of the terminal. But we were turned away."

Studying all options

Though the republic does not consider that a mere ocular visit would give it technically relevant information to determine the safety and fitness of the terminal, we thought that Piatco would appreciate the republic's sensitivity to public concern that the government study all options to provide improved transport facilities, including the possible opening of Terminal 3, he added.

Aside from Ermita, Bunye and Mendoza, the other officials who showed up at Naia 3 for the inspection were Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo and lawyer Florentino Feliciano.

State lawyers get tough on cell phone snatchers

From page A1

by then Justice Secretary Hernando Perez during his term, which Zuño reiterated in a circular to all prosecutors not only in the National Capital Region but also in the provinces and other cities.

Zuño said the order was specifically directed at NCR prosecutors because cell phone snatching was rampant in the capital.

"Most of the time, the victims are students who lose interest in pursuing their cases because of their studies. So the cases are dismissed," he noted, adding that with the instruction to prosecutors not to honor affidavits of desistance, the cases could now proceed.

He said all a victim had to do was identify in court the person who snatched his/her cell phone.

According to Zuño, cell phone snatching is "not simple theft but robbery with force and intimidation."

"The cell phones snatched are valuable. They're worth P10,000 to P15,000," he said.

The prescribed jail term is 6-12 years, except when the case involves frustrated murder or homicide, he said.

Villanueva case

Regarding the recent killing of newspaperman Jose Luis Villanueva by holdup men, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez ordered the Pasay City prosecutor's office to explain why the prosecutor handling the case was not present at the preliminary investigation on Friday.

The involved parties waited in vain from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. for the prosecutor to appear. "I don't want to tolerate things like that," Gonzalez said, adding that the prosecutor had 72 hours to explain.

Villanueva, assistant business editor of Today newspaper, was fatally stabbed by holdup men on a passenger bus when he refused to surrender his cell phone.

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R-II asks SC to throw out bid to nullify Smokey deal

By Philip C. Tubeza

SAYING the Smokey Mountain development project was legal, the companies of businessman Reghis Romero II yesterday asked the Supreme Court to dismiss the petition to void the project.

They added that some of government agencies that helped fund the P6.6-billion project even earned millions of pesos in developing the former dump.

In a 58-page comment filed on Oct. 1, R-II Builders and R-II Holdings asked the high court to dismiss the petition of former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez against the project for lack of merit.

They said former Presidents Corazon Aquino and Fidel Ramos issued orders that classified the submerged areas around Smokey Mountain as alienable or disposable public lands.

The contract is the subject of a Senate investigation and Romero had refused to testify in the Senate hearing because the case is now with the Supreme Court.

Chavez had asked the tribunal on Aug. 5 to void the joint venture agreement (JVA) between the National Housing Authority and R-II Builders Inc. to develop Smokey Mountain since it allows a private corporation to acquire at least 79 hectares of public land reclaimed from Manila Bay.

He said that this was illegal since the Supreme Court had ruled in its decision on the PEA-Amari scandal that lands of public domain cannot be acquired by private corporations.

But the respondents said Aquino and Ramos in 1992 and 1994 gave the NHA the authority needed to reclaim the lands and develop them into a low-cost medium-rise housing and industrial/commercial complex.

"Exercising his power to reserve public lands for settlement and specific public purposes, (Ramos) withdrew those lands from the public domain and conveyed them to the NHA, a government corporation," they said.

SC clears 2 appeals justices

THE SUPREME Court has dismissed a businessman's administrative complaint against two Court of Appeals justices, one of whom was accused of extorting P1.5 million.

In a 32-page decision dated Sept. 22, the high court junked the complaint of businessman Antonio K. Litonjua against Court of Appeals Justices Juan Q. Enriquez and Bernardo P. Abesamis (now retired) after Litonjua failed to substantiate his allegations.

Litonjua had charged Enriquez with gross ignorance of the law and serious misconduct alleging that the justice had tried to extort P1.5 million from the businessman in exchange for a favorable decision in cases that involved American Realty Corp., the Litonjuas' family corporation.

Litonjua accused Abesamis of serious misconduct for allegedly influencing Enriquez to issue a temporary restraining order and an injunction in the cases.

"Despite the serious nature of the accusations and the attendant publicity, he failed to convince the (court) that credence should be given to his complaint," said the ruling penned by Justice Adolfo S. Azcuna. *Philip C. Tubeza*

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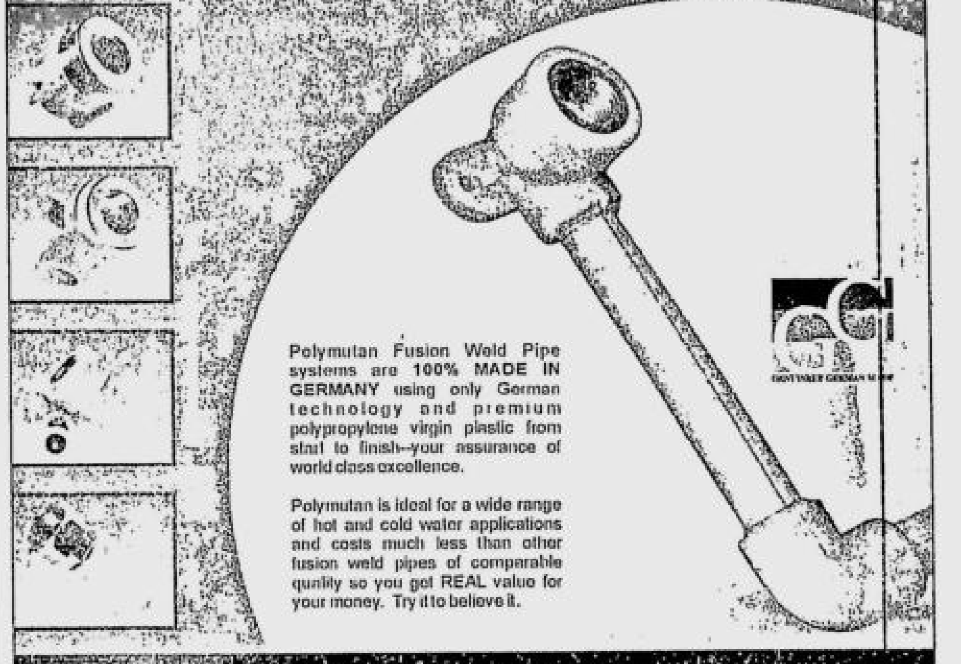

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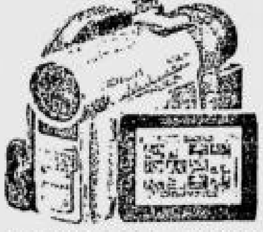

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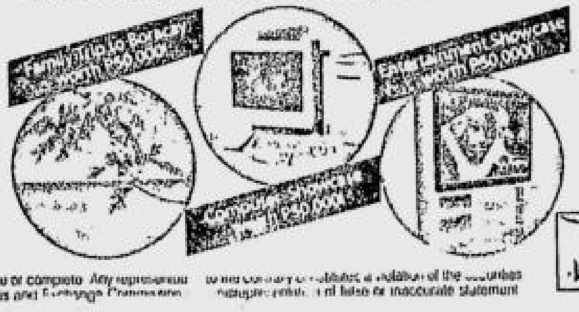

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Food coupons for poorest families

From page A1

Malacañang announced its plan to distribute food coupons a day after the Social Weather Stations released survey results showing that one in every seven families nationwide had nothing to eat at least once in the past three months.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman said some five million poor families would be given food vouchers which they could claim in some grocery stores joining the government's "lifeline" program for the poor.

"The idea is the voucher system can help a family go through a period when its food needs are not met. But this won't be forever, we need to have intervention ... to help them (become self-sufficient)," Soliman said.

Sen. Ralph Recto, however, proposed a different tack to the problem of hunger.

To help ease the hunger pangs of poor families and at the same time provide education to their children, Recto called for the adoption of a "school-attendance-for-rice swap" program.

Under his proposal, 100,000 elementary school-age children from "ultra poor and food insecure" families will be given one kilo of rice each for every day they attend school.

Learn while you eat

"This school-attendance-for-rice swap will solve two problems—the high incidence of dropouts among students coming from poor families, and of malnutrition among the latter," he said.

Recto said the come-on of the program was: "You learn while your family eats ... You get a diploma and your family gets food."

He said that 500,000 Filipinos would benefit from the program, which would cost the government P360 million every year while providing education to 100,000 children and nutrition to half a million Filipinos.

Each child would be bringing home 200 kilos of rice a year if he or she does not skip classes during the 200 school days of a year, according to Recto's novel idea.

Recto said it would be the public school principals who would select, based on certain criteria, the children who would benefit from the program.

Not begging

Recto said the idea of food doleouts was not new. He said that during the administration of Ms Arroyo's father, the late Diosdado Macapagal, products like wheat, cornmeal and powdered milk were distributed in public schools.

Soliman said the distribution of coupons would be a "dignified" way of helping the poor.

"The coupons mean these people have a right to get X amount of food in a dignified way, without begging for it. It's just like going to the grocery, except that you have a coupon," Soliman told the INQUIRER by phone.

She said the food coupon scheme would also convey the spirit of compassion.

"It would give the signal of people wanting to help other people. This is the best demonstration we can give in the spirit of Ramadan and Christmas, of the more fortunate people watching out for others in a most compassionate manner," she said.

In lieu of Christmas gifts

Soliman said the mechanism for the voucher system was still being worked out by the DSWD and the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

She said she and NAPC convenor Imelda Nicolas had been talking to big grocery chains to help by providing the food items.

"Instead of giving Christmas gifts or [donating] to charities, we are asking them if they can direct some of the funds to this program," Soliman said, adding that three big grocery stores had so far agreed. She declined to name them, however.

The coupons can be claimed at National Food Authority stores around the country.

Soliman said the DSWD and the NAPC would use as basis the five million recipients of Philhealth insurance cards, who had been identified as belonging to the poorest families in the country.

"But we are going to validate them," she said. Thus, the number of poor families to be given the coupons could be lower than five million.

Free food once a month

Soliman said the amount of food that could be claimed by a family, and the frequency, would depend on the budget and the capacity of the cooperating grocery stores. The idea is to enable a poor family to avail of the free food items at least once a month.

Ms Arroyo said there was no denying the problem of hunger.

"We cannot shut our eyes to the truth of hunger and poverty," she said in a statement.

"I spend most of my working day on these challenges—building the physical, digital and human infrastructure to fight poverty, while nursing precious resources to extend the lifeline to the most needy families."

Ms Arroyo said unemployment in the cities and the pockets of conflict in the countryside were the immediate causes "but the overall challenge is structural and strategic, encompassing the entire run of human development issues."

"Our nation has all the resources to feed its people but we have to unlock the channels for food and opportunity to flow," she said.

Businessmen yesterday urged Ms Arroyo to disperse economic growth outside urban areas and impose more stringent population control measures to boost the income of a growing number of poor Filipinos going hungry under her administration.

Philippine Exporters Confederation president Sergio Ortiz-Luis said the SWS survey only confirmed that the economic growth being reported by the government in the last three years had not trickled down to the masses.

Jobs in rural areas

"Even if the economy is growing, it is growing only at the top and not at the bottom. That people are going hungry in a resource-rich country like the Philippines showed an acute problem in the distribution of wealth," Ortiz-Luis said.

Ortiz-Luis suggested that Ms Arroyo focus her development programs in the rural areas to discourage provincial folk from migrating to crowded cities by giving them job opportunities where they live.

"People are going hungry because they have low incomes and little buying capacity with the rising cost of basic commodities. The solution is to create job opportunities, particularly in rural areas," Ortiz-Luis said.

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry executive vice president Donald Dee said spreading economic growth evenly throughout the Philippines would immediately address the hunger problem considering that food was more abundant and affordable in the provinces.

Federation of Philippine Industries president Jesus Arranza urged Ms Arroyo to allocate P20 billion in funds under the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act to meet its objectives and make sure the funds did not line the pockets of unscrupulous officials.

Arranza said Ms Arroyo should also check why food prices remained high even after nearly P60 billion had been spent in the last six years to improve post-harvest facilities and the transport network.

Unchecked birth rate

Aside from dispersing economic growth, industrialist Raul T. Concepcion said that Ms Arroyo should consider checking the country's population growth.

"It's unthinkable to go hungry in our country but what can we do if we just allow our population to get out of control?" he said.

Concepcion noted that Thailand's economy and the baht had remained robust and firm in the last decade compared to the Philippines because of Bangkok's aggressive birth control program.

He said the government would not be able to reduce poverty no matter how much the economy grew as long as population growth remained high.

Much too many babies–Flavier

From page A1

our growth rate of 2.36 percent was OK, the fact remains our food growth is only 2.1 percent," he told reporters.

Flavier specifically referred to Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit who, he said, had contended that the country had no problem in terms of its population growth and saw no need to focus attention on this.

"We have to balance the number versus the resources," Flavier said.

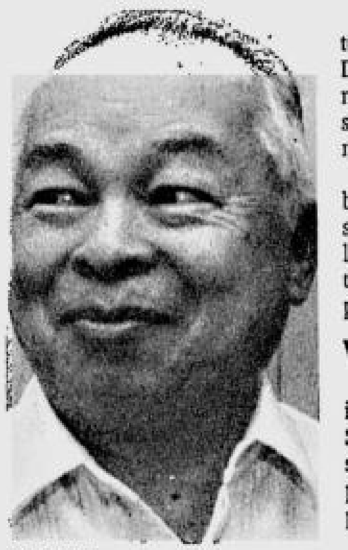
As health secretary in the administration of Fidel Ramos, Flavier had clashed with the Catholic Church for his vigorous implementation of the government's family planning program.

Lack of contraceptives

Flavier said the current administration's family planning program was promoting the natural method of curbing births.

"What I'm saying is that it should be pursued more aggressively and more realistically," Flavier said.

He also took exception to



FLAVIER

Dayrit's statement at a population and development conference that local health centers had abundant supplies of contraceptives but these were "underutilized."

Flavier said he had received many complaints that clinics actually lacked contraceptive supplies.

"So somebody is making *bola* (making things up)," he said.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who attended the conference where Dayrit was the key speaker, dismissed the health secretary's presentation of the DOH family planning program as "gobbledygook."

Biazon said he was concerned because Dayrit's presentation basically meant that the DOH was leaving to local government units the initiative to implement family planning programs.

Where's P100M?

Flavier called for an accounting of the P100 million that Speaker Jose de Venecia had inserted in the last budget for the promotion of natural family planning methods.

Flavier said he learned that the DOH had used or was using the money to train people in natural family planning methods.

But he said sketchy reports he had received indicated that some of those trained had been giving out the wrong information about artificial contraception.

"Some of them would say using contraceptive pills would be bad for women, and it could cause cancer," Flavier said.

High oil prices, floods send inflation soaring

From page A1

expected by analysts to stay firm heading into the northern hemisphere winter when demand peaks.

Neri, also the socioeconomic planning secretary, said he expected inflation to stay "close to 7 percent in the last quarter of the year, fueled mostly by increases in oil prices."

For the full year, inflation would average 5.4 percent, higher than the government's target of 4 to 5 percent, he said. Inflation averaged 4.8 percent in the first eight months.

Except for clothing, prices of all commodity groups accelerated last month, according to the NSO.

Rising food prices

Prices of food, beverage and tobacco (FBT) rose to 7.1 percent from 6.5 percent in August.

Housing and repairs, 3.4 percent from 3 percent; fuel, light and water, 9.2 percent from 7.2 percent; services, 11.7 percent from 11.3 percent; miscellaneous items, 2.4 percent from 2.3 percent, and clothing, 2.2 percent.

For food alone, prices rose 7.3 percent in September from 6.8 percent the previous month.

This was due to hefty increases in the prices of corn, 11.9 percent; cereal preparations, 5.8 percent; dairy products, 9.1 percent; eggs 6.2 percent; fruits and vegetables, 9.5 percent, and miscellaneous food items, 4.5 percent.

The price increase for rice was 3 percent, the same as the previous month's. Increases in the prices of fish and meat, on the other hand, slowed down to 8.7 percent and 15.4 percent, from 9.2 percent and 15.5 percent, respectively.

Neri said floods caused by monsoon rains adversely affected vegetable production and reduced supplies to wet markets.

Aside from the rains, Neri blamed the higher prices of raw materials such as flour for the increase in food prices.

Electricity rates

Neri said the recent increase in electricity and fuel prices also contributed to the jump in the cost of basic food items such as cooking oil, powdered tonic drinks, coffee, sugar, margarine, ginger and selected spices and seasoning.

He noted that prices of petroleum products averaged P23.27 per liter, or 3 percent higher than the P22.52 recorded in August.

In Metro Manila, inflation stood at 6.4 percent last month, higher than the 6.1 percent recorded in August, according to the NSO. Outside the metropolis, it was 7.1 percent, up from 6.4 percent.

Same target

Although the government has admitted that its inflation target for the year will be breached, it does not intend to change the target.

Jose Mario Cuyegkeng, economist at ING in Manila, said pressure from possible transport fare hikes, wage demands and an expected fresh round of power rate hikes would fuel inflation into next year.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), which has not touched its policy rates for more than a year, said there was no urgent need for an increase because rising inflation was the result of higher costs rather than stronger demand.

6.75 percent

The bank's overnight borrowing rate stands at 6.75 percent and its overnight lending rate is at 9 percent.

Deliberate caution

"It is not a question of deliberate complacency on the part of the monetary authorities but deliberate cautiousness," Diwa Guinigundo, BSP assistant governor, said, adding that September's inflation rate had been anticipated.

Gunigundo had said that keeping a relatively low inflation target was helpful in encouraging the government to exert efforts to ease inflation. *With a report from Reuters*

What is inflation

INFLATION is the measure of how much prices had changed over a specified period of time, usually one year.

The government agency tasked with computing the inflation rate is the National Statistics Office (NSO).

The NSO uses the consumer price index (CPI), which is the change in the average retail price of a "market basket" of goods and services usually purchased by the public. This market basket is a sample of all goods and services bought by a particular group of people in a particular area.

In computing for the CPI, weights are assigned to specific groups of items to indicate their relative importance in the basket.

Starting this year, the NSO used both 1994 and 2000 as base years. There was a need to have another base year because of the economic, social and technological changes that affected the preferences of Filipino consumers.

The weight of the food, beverages and tobacco (FBT) group was reduced to 50.031 in the 2000 base from 55.12 in the 1994 base. Fuel, light and water group's weight rose to 6.95 from 5.74.

Other non-food items that include clothing, housing and repairs and miscellaneous items were given a total of 43.02, down from 44.88.

The food items are rice, corn, dairy products, cereal, fish, fruits and vegetables and meat. Non-food items include rental rates and construction materials, household furnishings, educational and medical services, transportation and communications.

Price quotations are then taken from sample outlets or establishments, which are chosen based on their popularity, consistency or completeness of stock, accessibility and permanency.

These quotations are collected simultaneously in all provincial capitals and cities and in about 600 towns nationwide. In Metro Manila, the prices of food items are collected weekly while those of nonfood items are collected twice a month.

In terms of the purchasing power of the peso, since 2000, the local currency has lost 20 centavos of its value.

DA, producers agree to keep food prices down

From page A1

the right to raise prices. If we jack up prices, no one will buy from us," he said.

Told that the problem was not food shortage but the people's lack of money, Yap said the government had intervened to keep food prices down at least up to December.

"We have an obligation to let the public know the real situation that the problem is not in supply, not in farmgate prices but somewhere else," Yap said at the press briefing.

Yap said the public should not be alarmed because the government was doing its best to keep supplies and prices stable.

The DA has moved to link the poultry and agricultural producers directly to the markets, through the National Market Vendors Cooperative, to keep retail prices low.

Yap said the producers were trying to lower their farmgate prices. Prices of chicken went up last year due to limited production, according to the agriculture secretary.

Chicken prices

The DA's monitoring of food prices in Metro Manila showed that the prevailing price of dressed chicken is P95 a kilo, with a low of P80 and a high of P100.

Pabi, a group of commercial raisers, and Ubra, a group of backyard raisers, have committed to keep farmgate prices of chicken at P60 to P62 a kilo.

"This is on the condition that corn feed prices will remain at current levels and the continuation of the special safeguard mechanism that would limit imports," said Ubra president Gregorio San Diego.

Pabi, which accounts for 80 percent of the country's production, includes San Miguel Foods Corp., Swift Foods Inc., Tyson-Agro-Ventures Inc., Universal Robina Corp. and Vitarich Corp.

A 40-percent tariff is slapped on imports. As a result, the prices of chicken from Thailand and Canada stand at P80 and P131 a kilo, respectively.

Growing demand

For assorted cuts from Australia, the landed cost is P88 a kilo, and that for leg quarters from the United States is P70 a kilo.

Pabi and Ubra plan to increase production by 5 to 10 percent by the end of the year to meet the increasing demand.

Egg producers, on the other hand, have committed to keep the price of medium-size eggs at P3.50 per piece until the end of the year.

The associations of meat processors have likewise committed to keep prices of meat products at current levels until December.

The Philippine Association of Meat Processors and the Pampanga Meat Processors Organization assured the public that there would be no shortage of hotdogs, *longganiza*, ham, bacon, *hamonado* and other processed meats. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*

THE FOOD supply is adequate, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap (in suit) assures the public at a press conference at the Palace on Tuesday, and that his office was working to eliminate middlemen between producers and retailers to reduce the prices of staples. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Tañada scion bats . . .

From page A1

tem yesterday, saying scrapping it would mean "there'll be no more funds for electrification, irrigation, farm-to-market roads and livelihood programs.

"We will see a steady increase in poverty incidence and the high incidence of hunger in the country will certainly go up further," he said.

Tañada's warning followed the release of the results of a recent survey by the Social Weather Stations showing that hunger had risen to record levels in Metro Manila and Mindanao in just two months of President Macapagal-Arroyo's second term.

Nationwide, according to the survey, one out of every seven household heads polled in August said his family had nothing to eat at least once in the last three months, three times the number in the previous year.

From a towering tree

Tañada, 41, is the son of nationalist fighter and former Sen. Wigberto "Bobby" Tañada and a grandson of the late Sen. Lorenzo Tañada, a towering figure who battled corruption and human rights abuses while championing the nationalist cause.

As chair of the National Union of Students of the Philippines in his younger days, the young Tañada had led protests against US military bases and a pervasive foreign multinational role in the economy.

"How can we modernize agriculture with the abolition of the pork barrel?" Tañada asked. "What would now happen to rural electrification and irrigation of farmlands? The pork cutback will make more Filipinos hungry.

"Our constituents are very much worried," he said.

'Not equal but equitable'

Malacañang has submitted to Congress its proposed 2005 national budget seeking a 40-percent slash in the pork barrel of senators and congressmen.

A 40-percent reduction would mean each congressman would receive about P40 million instead of the usual P65-70 million, while each senator would get P120 million instead of P200 million.

Tañada said the proposed P40 million for each congressman would be divided into P20 million for infrastructure and P20 million for "soft projects," like financial assistance to hospitals.

This means an average of only P2 million in infrastructure projects for each of the 10 municipalities in his district, he said.

Tañada stressed that if there were a reduction in pork funds, the cuts should "not be equal but equitable."

No to line budgeting

"This means that poorer districts will not suffer from the same cuts as better-to-do districts," he said.

Tañada also opposed the line-item budgeting of pork, which means that each project and the funds for it must be specified in advance.

"It would be disadvantageous to provinces that are prone to calamities, like typhoons and floods," Tañada said, citing Quezon as an example.

"By going for a line-item, you remove the discretion to realign funds for relief, rescue and rehabilitation of calamity-stricken districts," he said.

Great equalizer

Tañada said a referendum on whether to abolish the pork barrel would show that majority of the people would want the funds to stay.

"For them, pork barrel is the great equalizer," Tañada said, explaining that with pork, congressmen would be able to fund projects neglected by the national government.

Mahathir: Share wealth before growing business

From page A1

the question of equity can be ignored. But it can't be ignored. At least not for long. Equitable distribution of wealth must be attempted, even if this gets in the way of growth," he said, adding:

"Failure at equitable distribution almost always results in racial confrontation and violence of one kind or another."

He said social equity was crucial for world economic growth: "On a world scale, we are witnessing today how the greed of the rich is affecting the growth of the world and themselves because of disregard for equity in the distribution of opportunities and wealth between rich nations and poor nations.

"That, in essence, is what the present interpretation of globalization is about."

Striking a balance

Mahathir said a government's effort to realize an equitable distribution of national wealth was necessary to unite a country as culturally diverse as Malaysia.

He said this process required a continuous effort of striking a balance between the conflicting interests of the rich and poor.

In gaining independence from the British, Malay leaders had to work hard to unite the nation's indigenous Malays as well as ethnic Chinese and Indians, who were further divided between the rich and the poor.

But Mahathir stressed that the rich deserved help in making reasonable profits from their legitimate business activities so they could help develop the economy.

"Trying to bring about equity by expropriating the wealth of the rich—such as what the communists did—and ensuring that no one gets rich, is counterproductive and detrimental to the well-being of the poor," he said.

On the other hand, he said, the poor must be protected from the "predatory instincts" of the rich.

"The poor should pay less or no taxes, and their incomes should be reasonable through government supervision of the employers and the rich," he said.

Mahathir said that in Malaysia, the government directly controlled the prices of essential goods and services "to prevent abuses which cause inflation."

Confrontation through rallies and strikes only discourages investments and prevents the creation of jobs, he said.

He added: "We have not completely succeeded in creating an equitable society hand in hand with growth in Malaysia, but what has been achieved is quite significant ... and far exceeds those of other countries.

"Provided that the policies and strategies are continued and new ideas introduced, business growth with social equity will continue to characterize Malaysia's economic scene."

Anwar's chances

Mahathir commented on a wide range of issues, including the acquittal last month of his former deputy and political rival, Anwar Ibrahim, on sodomy charges.

He belittled the chances of Anwar, once deemed his heir apparent, of making a strong political comeback: "In Malaysian law, if you are convicted, you are not allowed to participate in politics for five years beginning from the end of [your] sentence. So for his first charge [of corruption], he was found guilty, and five years from that he can't participate in politics."

Mahathir also said support for Anwar had waned.

"We are not worried about him because the acquittal was on very flimsy grounds and he has actually no support, like he did before. He will have support from outside the country, but outside the country they're not our constituents," Mahathir added, drawing loud applause.

Fair treatment

While Mahathir declined to give advice to Ms Arroyo, he urged Philippine leaders to be fair in dealing with foreign investors.

"It is essential that we treat foreign investors fairly," he said. [I'm not saying that] if they do something wrong, we shouldn't act against them. But we must be fair to them, and then [they] will have confidence in the country, and they will come, even without you calling them."

He recalled that Malaysian businessmen once tried to invest in another country but were turned off after the government of that country tried to amend the terms of the business deal after a change of leadership.

"Of course, when you do that, you will deter other investors from coming in," he said.

He cited this experience when asked to comment on the Supreme Court's decision to stop the sale of the Manila Hotel to Malaysian investors years ago because of the law limiting foreign ownership of property.

Mahathir also said his government's economic success lay in its support for large as well as small- and medium-scale enterprises.

He said Malaysia had adopted the Japanese concept of "one village, one product" and provided credit to small businessmen without requiring collateral.

"You have to be interested in all segments of the economy. We can't just focus on the big corporations and ignore the small ones. Because the small ones feed the big ones," he said.

Mahathir attributed Malaysia's success in unifying its multiracial population to its coalition government—"a government by all parties ... represent[ing] all different races and different classes."

Coalition government

He said Malaysia succeeded in rooting out the communist insurgency in 1990 after dealing with it militarily and addressing its causes.

The government, he said, granted citizenship to one million Chinese and provided them land and the means to earn a living—thus reducing support for the insurgents.

While there is still a difference in the economic status of the ethnic Chinese and the Malays, "the disparity is less than before and, therefore, more tolerable," he said.

Thus, he said, during the 1997 Asian currency crisis, "the Malaysians did not blame the Chinese for the recession and did not burn Chinese shops." *With an AFP report*

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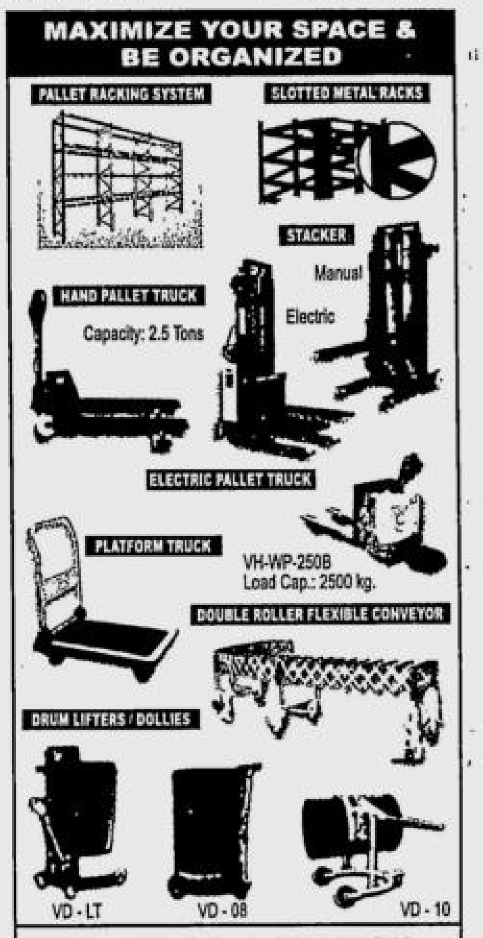

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Proclamation No. 540 declaring the first week of October of each year as "National Newborn Screening Week"
Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9288 signed on October 5, 2004

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

It's Cheney, Edwards turn to debate

CLEVELAND—Vice President Dick Cheney and Sen. John Edwards take center stage in the race for the White House on Tuesday in a nationally televised debate that is likely to focus on the Iraq war and US security issues but also will include domestic topics.

With polls showing the race for the White House tightening after last week's clash between President George W. Bush and Democratic rival John Kerry, the stakes for the showdown between their running mates have been raised dramatically.

Cheney, the administration's most outspoken supporter of the war and harshest critic of Kerry, will make the White House's case for the invasion of Iraq and try to stem the momentum building for Kerry since he put Bush on the defensive in last week's debate.

Bush campaign strategist Matthew Dowd said Cheney would "explain to the American people why the president's policies are right for this country and the world in fighting the war on terror, in keeping our economy growing and responding to the new challenges in the 21st century."

Edwards, a first-term senator from North Carolina who was chosen for the ticket by Kerry after a strong primary run, will try to put Cheney on the defensive about the administration's policies in Iraq, its record on jobs and health care and its ties to special interests, Kerry aides said.

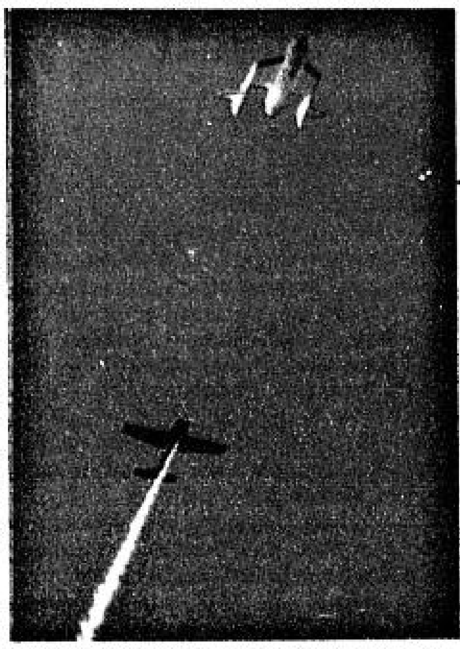
"We expect John Edwards to hold Dick Cheney and George Bush accountable for their record," Kerry adviser Joe Lockhart said.

Cheney's prominent role as a senior adviser in the administration, and a flurry of new polls showing Kerry closing the gap on Bush or pulling even, have added new luster to the vice presidential debate, traditionally a campaign sideshow.

Cheney is portrayed by critics as the dark architect of the Iraq war. His secretive energy task force, along with his ties to energy giant Halliburton and the oil industry, have made him a lightning rod for Democratic complaints.

Edwards is expected to press Cheney about his role in formulating the administration's energy and Iraq policies, and on Cheney's connections to Halliburton, which he headed from 1995 to 2000 and which now is a leading US military contractor in Iraq.

"I think there is a very powerful argument that Dick Cheney's experience and his judgment and especially the advice he has given the president has not been good for the American people," Kerry adviser Tad Devine said. *Reuters*



FOLLOWED by a chase plane trailing smoke, SpaceShipOne with pilot Brian Binnie at the controls glides back to earth after soaring into space to clinch the Ansari X Prize at Mojave, California Airport on Monday. AP

SpaceShipOne bags $10-M prize, sets new record

MOJAVE, Calif.—The world's first privately funded manned spacecraft soared to the blackened frontiers of space for the second time in a week on Monday, setting a new altitude record and clinching a $10-million prize designed to spur commercial space travel.

SpaceShipOne, a stubby, three-seat rocket plane, hurtled to a height of 111,996 meters surpassing its target altitude without the heart-stopping barrel rolls that vexed the craft's qualifying flight on Wednesday.

The triumphant flight, which took place on the anniversary of the 1957 Sputnik launch, also eclipsed the world altitude record for a fixed-wing aircraft, set in 1963 by the experimental X-15 rocket plane.

"We are proud to announce that SpaceShipOne has made two flights to 100 km and has won the Ansari X Prize," space enthusiast Peter Diamandis, founder of the X Prize competition, told reporters at Mojave airport.

Thousands of spectators gathered beside the runway cheered as the craft glided back to the floor of California's desert for a textbook landing.

Brian Binnie, the 51-year-old former US Navy pilot who was at the controls, emerged smiling from the craft's side hatch onto the tarmac, where he was met by his wife.

Also present were aircraft designer Burt Rutan, Microsoft Corp. co-founder Paul Allen, who financed the venture at a cost of over $20 million, and British entrepreneur Richard Branson, who has licensed the SpaceShipOne design for a series of future commercial flights.

Binnie said that as he became weightless he did pulled out a paper model of SpaceShipOne and let it free fall in the cockpit with him as he snapped pictures. "There's a freedom there and a sense of wonder that, I tell you what, you all need to experience," he said.

The X Prize, aimed at encouraging the development of civilian space travel, was offered for the first team to fly three people, or the equivalent weight, to at least 100 km in altitude and do it again within two weeks. *Reuters*

Fighting erupts in Baghdad slum after car bombings

BAGHDAD—Heavy fighting erupted between US troops and Shiite militiamen in Baghdad's Sadr City slum on Monday night after car bombs earlier killed at least 26 people in two Iraqi cities.

Witnesses said American AC-130 aircraft pounded suspected rebel positions in Sadr City, but there was no immediate word on casualties and the US military said it had no information on the fighting.

The attack on the slum, a stronghold of firebrand Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr, was part of an offensive by US and Iraqi forces to crush a raging insurgency and take back all of Iraq before elections scheduled for January.

Residents said they could hear the sound of AC-130 rapid-fire cannons as blasts shook Sadr City, home to more than two million people.

"I hear explosions. AC-130 planes were firing," said a Sadr City resident.

He said he saw at least 12 tanks moving into Sadr City.

Helicopters could be heard in Baghdad heading in the direction of Sadr City.

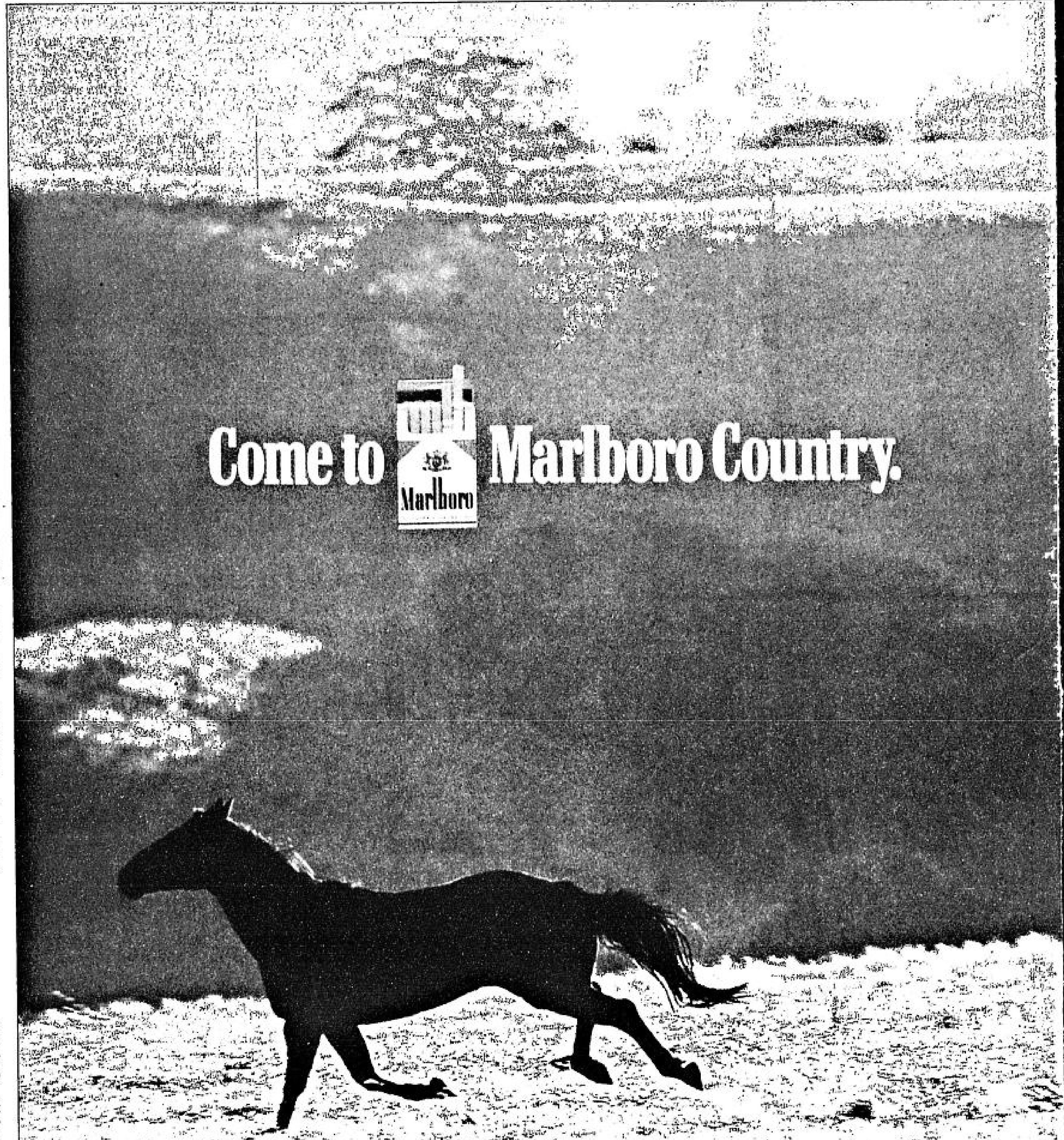
The fighting came after the car bomb attacks brought more carnage to the streets of two Iraqi cities as the interim government struggles to stamp out the insurgency ahead of nationwide polls.

More than 100 people were wounded as bombers struck twice in Baghdad and once in the northern city of Mosul.

In the first Baghdad blast, a car blew up near an entrance to the heavily fortified Green Zone, home to the interim government, killing at least 15 people and wounding 80, a hospital official said.

A second bomb exploded about an hour later as a US military convoy passed along Sadoun Street, a major thoroughfare east of the Tigris river, where several hotels used by foreign contractors are located. No US troops were killed or wounded.

In Mosul, a car bomb exploded outside a primary school, killing five people, including two children, police said. *Reuters*



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Megawati concedes defeat in Indonesian election

MEGAWATI

JAKARTA—Indonesia's outgoing President Megawati Sukarnoputri on Tuesday tearfully conceded defeat in last month's elections, clearing the way for the winner, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, to begin forming a new government.

Yudhoyono had been waiting for Megawati's concession before claiming victory, respecting the decorum of Indonesia's fledgling democracy despite his landslide victory in the Sept. 20 polls.

Yudhoyono, a US-educated retired army general, canceled plans for an acceptance speech on Monday after the results were officially released, as Megawati remained holed up in her residence.

But Megawati acknowledged her defeat Tuesday in a typically indirect speech to thousands of soldiers at a parade ground in the capital.

"Whoever has been chosen, we must graciously accept it, because the victory is a victory for all of us," she said to applause from those present, including Yudhoyono. Her voice broke, and she sobbed.

"We have succeeded in concluding a national task," she said. "For the first time in the history of the Indonesian republic we have chosen a president and vice president directly in an orderly and safe manner."

US President George W. Bush congratulated Yudhoyono on his victory.

"We look forward to working with... Yudhoyono in further strengthening our ties and enhancing the welfare of our peoples," he said in a statement released by the US Embassy in Jakarta.

Yudhoyono will be inaugurated Oct. 20. Markets and regional governments will now be anxious to see how he intends to lead the world's most populous Muslim nation.

He praised Megawati after her remarks.

"Her speech was good," he told reporters. "She has invited all of us to accept the results of the elections." He was set to make a victory speech later in the day.

The election was the first in which Indonesia's 210 million people voted for their president directly. It was praised as a key step in the country's transition to democracy after the fall of ex-dictator Suharto in 1998.

Yudhoyono will be Indonesia's sixth president, and the fourth since Suharto. The scale of Yudhoyono's victory has been obvious since election night.

The new president, who attended officer training college in the United States, won 60.62 percent of the vote compared Megawati's 39.38 percent, official results showed. A total of 115 million people voted.

Media reports Tuesday quoted a member of Megawati's team as saying it had identified balloting irregularities, which it may use as the basis for an appeal to the country's Constitutional Court.

Arif Wibowo acknowledged that the alleged irregularities in the polls, which were declared fair by local and international monitors, did not involve enough votes to influence the final result.

"Even though the votes that we are questioning are not significant, whatever happens they represent people's voice and cannot be disregarded," the Kompas newspaper quoted Wibowo as saying.

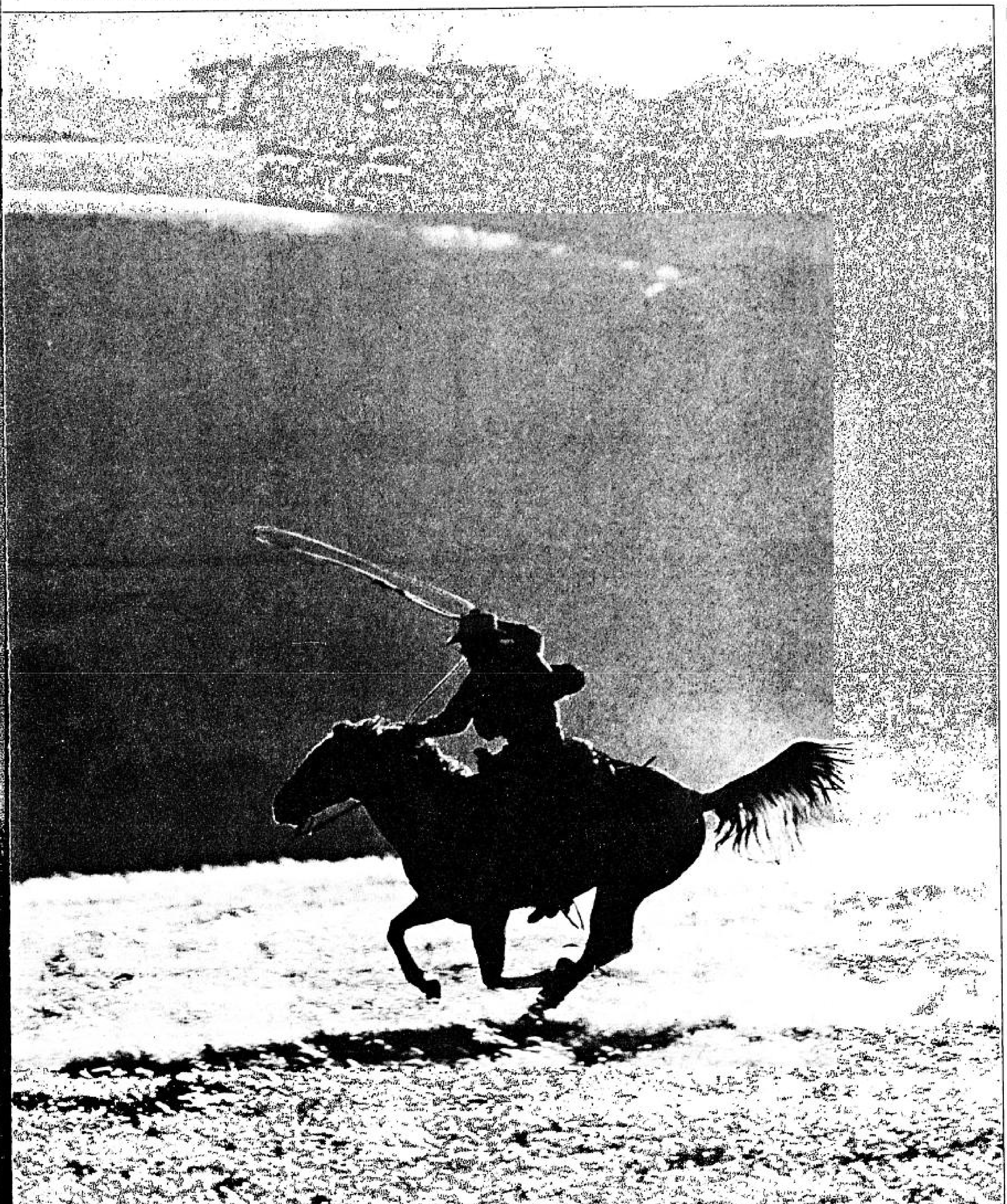
During the campaign, Yudhoyono presented few distinct policies. But voters hungry for change were impressed by his grasp of the issues and his honest image.

Megawati, the daughter of founding President Sukarno, had been seen as an icon of the reform movement during Suharto's 32-year dictatorship and was adored by the country's legions of poor. But public perception soured, with critics accusing her of failing to tackle rampant graft and of being aloof and uncaring.

Analysts say Yudhoyono must quickly take action in solving Indonesia's many problems—including several separatist insurgencies, a stagnant economy and terror threats—or risk losing supporters.

Yudhoyono led the country's antiterrorist effort as Megawati's security minister, and Western governments hope he will take a tougher stand against the al-Qaida linked Jemaah Islamiyah network, blamed for a series of attacks including the Oct. 12, 2002 Bali bombings that killed 202 people.

The new leader has also said he wants a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the northern province of Aceh, where separatist guerillas have been fighting since 1976 for an independent homeland. *AP*



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AXEL

2 US scientists win Nobel prize for medicine

STOCKHOLM—Two US scientists won the 2004 Nobel prize for medicine on Monday for showing how the sense of smell enables people to recall, for instance, the scent of spring lilac in winter or the stench of rotten food eaten long ago.

Scientists Richard Axel and Linda Buck, who published their ground-breaking research in 1991, discovered a large gene pool containing the blueprint for sensors in the nose that identify smells wafting through the air and send signals to the brain.

"Until Axel and Buck's studies the sense of smell was a mystery," said Prof. Sten Grillner of the Nobel Assembly.

Columbia University professor Axel, 58, and 57-year-old Buck, of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, discovered a large family of 1,000 different genes, three percent of the total in the human body, that give rise to an equivalent number of sensors in the nose that identify smells.

"I'm ecstatic, it's quite an honor," Axel told Swedish radio after winning half of the 10 million crown ($1.38 million) award from the Nobel Assembly of Sweden's Karolinska Institute.

Axel, who was traveling in San Francisco, later told a New York news conference via satellite: "The hope is that I can return to the laboratory with even greater intensity to try and address a number of unsolved problems of perception in the future."

He said he was interested in the problem of "how the brain, which consists largely of nerve cells and neurons, is capable of representing in a meaningful and accurate way the richness of the external world."

At the Seattle research center, Buck told reporters: "I am overjoyed and quite surprised to receive this great honor."

"There is a lot left to discover even though we've been working on this problem for 16 years," she said, referring to the olfactory system structure. "We've only scratched the surface of it."

The Nobel citation said their work had illustrated the role of the nose in distinguishing good and bad.

"A single clam that is not fresh and will cause malaise can leave a memory that stays with us for years and prevent us from ingesting any dish, however delicious, with clams in it," the citation said.

"(On the other hand) ... we can consciously experience the smell of a lilac flower in the spring and recall this olfactory memory at other times."

The sensors, known as "olfactory receptor types," sit on cells in the back of the nose and identify smells. *Reuters*

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Tarnished

EDITORIAL

MAJOR General Carlos Flores Garcia is ending his career in disgrace. After members of his family were found with large sums of money, whose source they could not adequately explain, given the modest salary he receives from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Garcia was relieved, in effect, of his responsibilities as comptroller of the AFP. But this itself seems to be emblematic of what is wrong with the AFP.

On Dec. 19, 2003, two of Garcia's sons were stopped by US Customs agents in San Francisco for failing to declare that they were bringing in $100,000 in cash. The Americans confiscated the money, not because it's illegal to bring in so much cash, but because of their failure to declare that they were bringing in an amount in excess of $10,000 as US regulations required.

In response, the wife of Garcia did to US authorities what, we presume she does to local authorities when she is caught in a fix. She asked them, "Do you know who I am?"

The Americans may not care who she is , but she took pains to try to impress them and in so doing, damned her husband. Aside from her son's $100,000, she boasted, she had brought in another $100,000 two days earlier. In fact, she further declared, she had brought into the US $200,000 in January last year and brought in similar amounts in 1995 and 1993.

All these add up to an astonishing $800,000 over a 10-year period—and she was only talking about cash—although she may have been exaggerating since official US records indicate that the Garcias had officially declared having brought in a total of $377,630 during that period.

But whether it was $800,000 as the Garcias claimed or $377,630 as the records show, and for whatever purpose—whether to buy condominiums in New York City, a house in Ohio, or pay for the foreign education of their three sons—this amount is well beyond what an honest general can earn, unless he is the son of a tycoon. Garcia apparently does not come from a family of means, and besides, his wife spelled out the sources of his wealth: commissions and gifts from the contractors and suppliers whose documents he had signed in his capacity as comptroller of the AFP. The fruits of these deals, combined with income from private businesses (on whose incomes the Garcias apparently neither paid taxes nor declared in official documents), made the family so comfortable that they could splurge on flying first class—something, incidentally, that many of the wealthiest Filipinos no longer do, because it's such a waste of money.

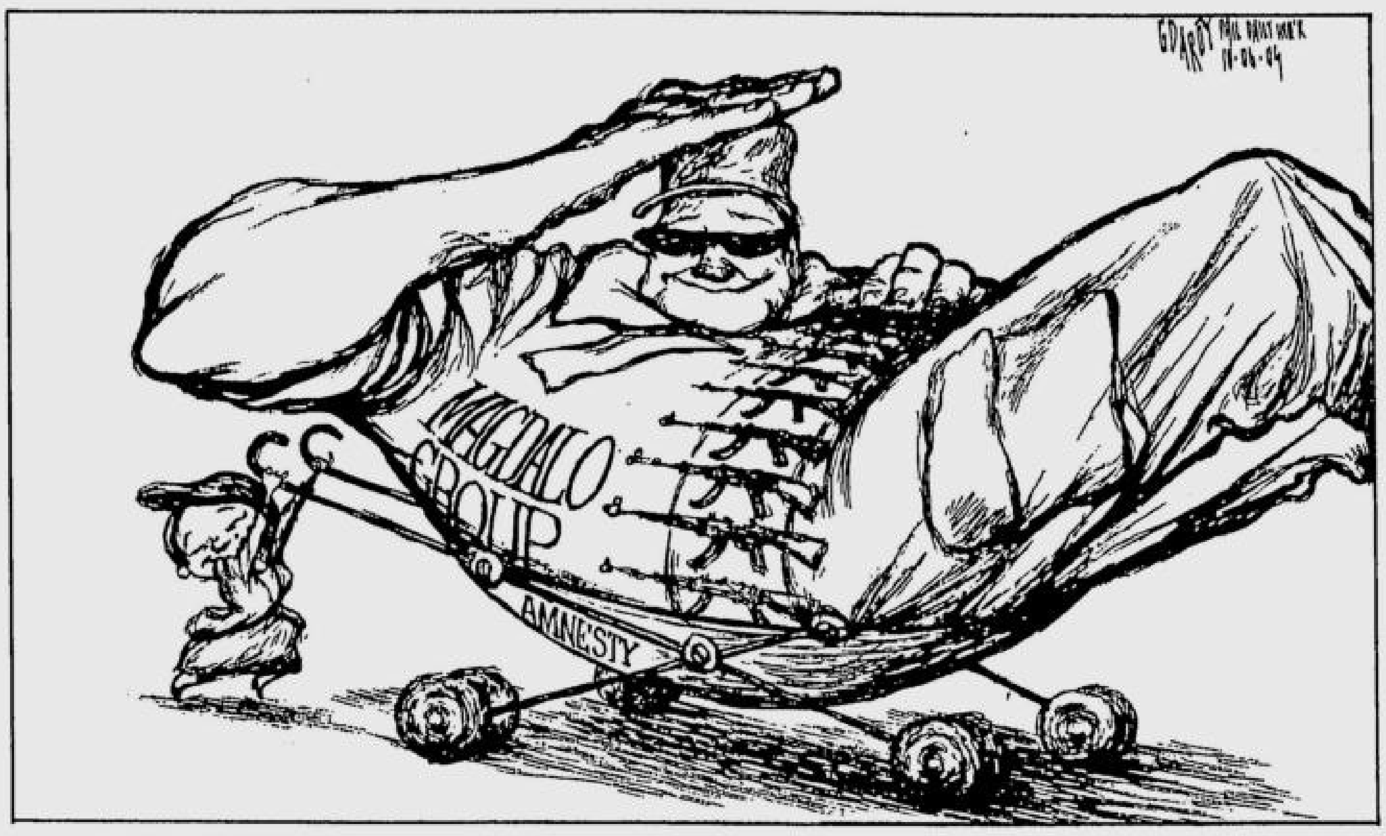
Tastelessness is not a crime, but living lavishly from the fruits of corruption is. Influence-peddling is, too. The only thing more scandalous than a comptroller—or supervisor—of public funds being caught with a fortune he can't logically explain, is that it took foreigners to catch him.

After he was caught, Garcia tried a last trick by filing a terminal leave of absence in advance of his retirement on Nov. 18. Thus, if the story hadn't been unearthed by a columnist, Garcia might have been able to flee the country, investigation or no investigation.

To be fair, the Office of the Ombudsman has already filed cases against Garcia and the AFP took him out of his job as comptroller. Still, we have yet to see real fire, genuine anger, true outrage on the part of the AFP.

The very least the AFP leadership could have done was to throw Garcia into a military stockade, pending a court martial. Instead what the nation has heard after the scandal broke are pleas for due process and for the public "not to prejudge the case." Instead of exhibiting some zeal in going after a top military officer linked to corruption, what the nation sees from the top brass is a reluctance to release even such a basic—and we must add, public—document as the general's statements of assets and liabilities.

There has hardly been such a strong and damning case against a high-ranking military officer such as this. It validates much of what has been said about corruption in our officer corps, and illustrates why the rank and file get upset over their seniors. Handling Garcia with kid gloves just emphasizes why disillusionment is rampant in the AFP. Can cronyism in the face of such corruption be allowed to endure? Or can the AFP exact justice from one of its own, one to whom it had trusted the responsibility to spend scarce military funds wisely, only to use them to send his family flying first class while poorly equipped soldiers risked dying at the hands of communist or separatist rebels and bandits?



Recto: Senate won't pass tax measures

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

HERE is good news for Filipino taxpayers. According to Sen. Ralph Recto, who was a guest at the Kapihan sa Manila forum last Monday, the eight proposed tax measures, even if passed by Congress, will not improve the economic situation of the Philippines. Neither will they provide jobs to Filipinos nor improve their lives. Collections from these tax measures will only be used to pay our foreign debts. Therefore, they will benefit foreigners, not Filipinos, whose take-home pay will be less because of the tax bite.

So why is that good news? Because the tax measures will not improve the economic situation anyway, Recto said, he doesn't think the Senate will pass any of them, not even the increase in the sin taxes, and especially not the increase in the oil tariff because it is regressive. Recto is the chair of the Senate ways and means committee, so his words regarding taxes have a lot of weight.

So, without new taxes, where does he propose the government get the money to pay our foreign debt?

From better tax administration, he said. There are hundreds of billions of pesos in taxes out there waiting to be collected, he pointed out.

Not only does the government not collect the correct taxes but also refunds taxes to ghost companies that never paid any taxes at all, somebody commented.

Yes, the tax credit scam, Recto agreed.

And in spite of the scam, do you know that the government is still giving out tax credit certificates?

Giving tax credit certificates is not bad per se, Recto said. We have to honor commitments to investors. The mistake was in allowing the certificates to be sold to third parties. That gave smart operators an idea how to make a killing. If they were non-transferable, there would have been no tax credit scam.

What about the plan to remove the tax incentives given to investors in free trade zones like the locators in Subic?

The incentives should continue, he replied. We should honor our commitments. We can remove the incentives to incoming investors if we want, but not from those who are already here. We cannot change policies after the investors are already in, otherwise nobody would believe us anymore. Nobody would invest here anymore.

* * *

Not only will new investors not come in, but those that are already here are threatening to pull out, particularly many of those in the Subic Special Economic Zone because of alleged "high-handed moves" of government against them. Recently, the Bureau of Internal Revenue bared moves to impose new taxes on locators in Subic and disallow several of their incentives. That will put business viability in the area under peril, the locators protested.

Ichiro Tsuji, president of the Subic Techno Park, said recently that Japanese investors are "very disappointed" with the proposed changes, fearing that these will result in the "contraction of business activities inside the Freeport zone." Taiwanese investors are also "agitated" over the plan.

Under the Bases Conversion Law (RA 7227), investors in the special economic zones pay only 5 percent tax on gross income in lieu of all other taxes. They are also entitled to tax breaks on direct costs incurred in the conduct of their operations. But the BIR, really desperate for tax collections, revealed recently its intention to scrap the tax breaks on all administrative, selling and operating expenses even if these are incurred directly and exclusively in registered business activities.

"Foul!" cried the investors. You can't change the rules in the middle of the game. The changes would make the investors less competitive.

A large number of investors have made Subic the hub of their businesses because of several considerations: its location, the setup, and the investment incentives. But while the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority is working hard to lure investors through tax incentives, the BIR is working just as hard to restrict the beneficial effects of these incentives to generate the needed revenues—a case of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing.

They are not seeking tax exemptions, the investors said. But they deserve respect, fairness and consistency in the application of rules that directly affect them.

But the government desperately needs more money to pay its debts, *'di ba?* Yes, but crisis or not, fairness and consistency are the values by which government can command the respect of investors and the public.

* * *

Still on the subject of fair play in the rules affecting business, the government has changed its mind on a rule in the bidding, scheduled late this month, for the sale of Napocor's coal-fired Masinloc power plant in Zambales. Foreign investors have denounced a provision which states that any winning bid by a foreign company may be matched by a Filipino-owned company, which will then be proclaimed the winner.

"Foul again!" howled the foreign investors. This is unfair, discriminatory and grossly disadvantageous to them who spend a lot of money to conduct studies and due diligence on the facility to be sold so that they can determine the right price, they said.

Among the foreign bidders are Marubeni of Japan, Kepco of Korea, YNN of Australia, YTL of Malaysia and the Atlanta-based Mirant. The lone Filipino bidder is First Generation Holdings of the Lopez Group.

I reported all these in my Sept. 27 column. Two days later, the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., the government agency tasked with disposing of Napocor's assets, removed that controversial provision.

Again, sense of country

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

BRIAN ENTWISTLE wrote this feedback:

"I really liked your article, 'Alarm bell.' As a foreigner (Aussie), I have often questioned the role that fleeing to the land of milk honey takes in the mind-set of the Philippines. I have debated the topic with my friends who are Ausaid-sponsored students from the Philippine public service. For me, it seems that it serves the government's best interest as an agent for the status quo to keep things the way they are in the Philippines, knowing that people will eventually look to foreign shores for their livelihood. Of course once they do go, they will be sending greenbacks back to the Philippines for their families.

"I've been going to the Philippines since 1988, and am constantly reminded by my friends of how hard life is in the Philippines. Some want me to find them spouses here… I hope (your article) provokes people to look in the mirror and consider their priorities."

Well, I myself have debated the point with detractors, foremost of them Filipinos abroad, particularly in the US. Some have been quite bitter, saying my remonstration with the current Filipino Diaspora is typical of people who have not discovered the virtue of democratic choice, something they now enjoy where they are, again notably in the US. I remember that my articles about Barry Gutierrez and several others who decided to come home after studying in prestigious schools in America (I praised them naturally) were received in this way by some readers, to my great astonishment. For some reason, those who had decided not to come home thought they were being disparaged.

Indeed, I recall that a group of college students from the Ateneo who came to interview me for a school project raised the issue too. Other Asian or Southeast Asian countries, they said, echoing a typical reply to my position, had nationals leaving their shores, and didn't seem the worse for it. Why should we be so?

Well, as I've said on several occasions, there's a difference between their exodus and ours. It lies in the quality as much as in the quantity. The quantity is patent. The sheer volume of Filipinos leaving this country is breathtaking. This year alone, some 2,000 doctors are expected to leave this country, as Minguita Padilla, who has chosen to stay put, reveals. I know it firsthand. A couple of friends of mine have opted to try their luck abroad. Both are bankers, a fact that makes me wonder what profession is likely to be spared the virus. (Well, maybe law enforcement.) One went to Canada, and the other, well, he was about to leave for the US when, on the eve of his departure, he got an offer from another local bank. He decided to pay to see, figuring he could always leave if it wasn't worth it.

I said it before: In other countries, the choice of leaving the country is a personal one. Here, it is a collective one. It is the difference between a disease and an epidemic, the exception and the rule. The epidemic is not bound to abate with the threat of an impending economic collapse.

The quality is more subtle, but is no less obdurate. In other countries, leaving home for a job abroad is the last resort, here it is the first. It is not a compulsion, it is a dream. It is not an act of desperation, it is an act of ambition. Other nationals, including the Chinese, study and work abroad. But the difference is that most of them come home: They cannot see themselves pursuing happiness elsewhere.

The sheer volume of Filipinos trekking to the ports and airports, some looking tearfully at a home they will never see again but most others sighing with relief and barely throwing a glance back, would not be a problem if it did not go with something more virulent, which is our lack of a sense of country. As I also said before, the problem is not really the overseas Filipino workers, it is our elite. This is a country whose leaders do not have a passion for it. This is a country whose elite studied in American schools, whose children study in American schools, who own townhouses in American suburbs. This is a country whose elite does not mind despoiling it because at the end of the day they can always leave it.

True enough, as Enwistle says, the Filipino Diaspora helps the elite keep the status quo. But far more than that, it frees the elite from being threatened by the collapse of the country. People have wondered why government officials do not seem to be alarmed by the brewing crisis, which, if some financial experts are to be believed, will make us lucky to end up like Argentina. Well, they can always leave the country.

That is my beef with dual citizenship. True enough also, other countries have dual citizenship and seem none the worse for it. Well, they are none the worse for it because their citizens carry with them their roots and their identity, which are never lost when they take on a second citizenship. But we are poorly rooted—give our government officials themselves a quiz in Philippine history and the majority will fail—and are only too willing to give up an inchoate identity at the slightest opportunity. The concept of Filipino citizenship is rubbery enough as it is. You give people dual citizenship, notably Filipino and American, and there will be precious little left of the Filipino to justify the word "dual."

In any case, the people seeking dual citizenship want only the dual benefits, they do not want the dual obligations. They only want the right to invest in the two countries they are citizens of, they do not want the obligation to pay taxes, or be drafted into war, in both.

Truly, the Filipino-bashing attributed to Art Bell may be a hoax but it is so only in attribution, it is not so in reverberation. It's an alarm bell that demands to be rung.

Russia, Kyoto and RP's power crisis

COMMENTARY

Roberto C. Yap, S.J., Ph.D.
Institute on Church and Social Issues

WE are truly living in an era of globalization. The actions of a nation as far away as Russia can have significant consequences on the Philippines.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's cabinet recently endorsed the Kyoto Protocol, giving decisive support to the long-delayed climate change treaty that should allow it to come into force worldwide. The implementation of the Kyoto agreement could have considerable impact on how the Philippines addresses its looming power crisis.

The Kyoto pact, the first ever to require cuts in emissions linked to global warming, will come into force with the Russian Parliament's expected approval. Although the protocol was negotiated in 1997 and has already been ratified by over 120 countries (including the Philippines), it will only take effect if supporters include nations accounting for at least 55 percent of all industrialized countries' 1990 emissions. After President Bush rejected the pact in 2001, the only way for it to cross that threshold was if Russia, a major industrial polluter, ratified it. Russia, which accounts for 17 percent of 1990 emissions, has held the key to Kyoto's success since the US pullout. With its expected ratification by the Duma, 61 percent of all industrialized countries' 1990 emissions will have been accounted for.

Kyoto is the first international environmental agreement that sets binding restrictions on emissions of heat-trapping gases, that are an unavoidable result of regular activities of modern life including driving a car and running a power plant. The main source of the dominant gas, carbon dioxide, is burning fossil fuels such as coal, diesel and oil.

The treaty would require 36 industrialized countries to reduce their collective emissions of greenhouse gases by 2012 to more than 5 percent below 1990 levels, with different targets negotiated for individual countries.

While developing countries like the Philippines do not have emission reduction targets under the protocol, the pact will open up new avenues for developing countries to develop and implement climate-friendly projects which will have sustainable development benefits.

Through Kyoto's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), industrialized countries can promote sustainable development by financing emission-reduction projects in developing countries in return for carbon credits against their Kyoto targets. In effect, the Philippines by hosting emission reduction projects can generate and sell emission reduction credits to industrialized countries that need these carbon credits to help meet their Kyoto commitments. Industrialized countries will receive these carbon credits in return for their investments in projects which reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide sustainable development benefits.

It is through participation in the CDM that the Philippines will have an innovative way of dealing with the impending power crisis. The Department of Energy forecasts that Visayas and Mindanao will be experiencing power shortages in 2005 and Luzon in 2008. Investments in power generation are required if these shortages are to be avoided. These investments are urgent, given that it takes four to five years to put up a new power plant.

Given the urgency of the increasing power demand, it is most likely that the new power plants will use conventional fossil fuels such as coal or oil. Electricity generation technologies that use these fuels cost the least. Unfortunately, the burning of these fossil fuels results in significant carbon emissions.

Electricity can be generated using cleaner energy sources. Power can be produced using renewable energy technologies such as wind, solar, hydro and biomass. These technologies are climate-friendly in that they do not result in carbon emissions. However, renewable energy technologies cannot compete with conventional fuels in terms of costs. Given our financial difficulties, these costlier technologies will not have much of a chance against the relatively cheaper conventional fossil fuel technologies.

Kyoto's CDM could give a much needed financial boost to using renewable energy sources instead of coal or oil. Through the CDM, industrialized countries (such as Japan, Netherlands, United Kingdom) could invest in power generation projects which use renewable energy.

These projects would generate emission reduction credits because cleaner renewable energy sources are used for electricity production instead of carbon-intensive fuels. These carbon credits could give the incentive for the foreign investments needed to make renewables competitive.

Several prototype CDM projects are already in the pipeline to increase the power capacity of the Philippines. The largest wind farm in Southeast Asia is being constructed in Bangui Bay, Ilocos Norte. It is expected to generate 25 megawatts of electricity and to eliminate 76,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually. A 30-megawatt bioenergy plant using bagasse will be put up in Talisay, Negros Occidental, and is expected to have annual reductions of 140,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Thanks to Russia's crucial support of the Kyoto Protocol, more CDM financing will be available for the development of renewable energy projects that could help avert the Philippine power crisis.

Chip and Kim: Real winners

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ANY day now, Season 6 of "The Amazing Race," which bested older and better-rating "reality" shows in the last Emmy Awards, will open with a whole new set of contestants, a whole new itinerary and new challenges.

Producers, though, are keeping mum about any possible innovations they might introduce, like the infamous "Yield" that made the final episodes of "AR5" so exciting. There still isn't any word, either about the destinations the teams might be visiting. If you will recall, Filipinos followed Season 5 with feverish devotion because the Philippines was included in the itinerary, and as it turned out, the episodes shot in Manila, Cavite, Laguna and Lagen Island in El Nido, Palawan were some of the most intense and tension-filled during the entire season.

As everyone who followed the last season—as well as those who merely followed the reviews—must know by now, the winners were Chip and Kim, a married couple who live in California with their three children. Jovial and helpful, and ever-appreciative of the sights and the people they encountered in their race around the world, these "married parents" topped the on-line popularity polls among viewers with 88 percent of the votes. That they ended up beating the super-competitive team of Colin and Christie must surely have gladdened the hearts of many viewers!

Yesterday, courtesy of ABS-CBN Studio 23 (thank you, Amy Mosura!) and Buenavista Television in the US, I got a chance to briefly interview Chip and Kim by phone. Though the connection was spotty at times, the couple's high spirits and positive vibes came through strongly.

* * *

"WE MUST definitely return to the Philippines!" Chip boomed when I asked him his impressions of the country. "The people are so friendly, and El Nido is the most beautiful island we have ever seen." He added that he and Kim had been to many beach destinations, even before they joined Amazing Race, but none was as enjoyable and "extremely beautiful" as Lagen Island.

Chip also expressed his "appreciation" of the drivers in Manila, noting that while "I had never been scared of dying" during the entire race, "the taxi and jeep drivers of Manila were certainly energetic," and whizzing through the city's chaotic streets was itself an experience.

While Kim knew that the petite young woman who welcomed them at the Coconut Palace was Luli Macapagal Arroyo, the President's daughter, Chip confessed that "I never found out who she was until we were already back home. I'm upset that I wasn't told who she was."

"You see," Chip explained, "we agreed that I would do all the physical challenges so that Kim could do the thinking, the strategizing and relating to the other teams and production staff. I must confess that I wasn't even aware of what was happening half the time."

Only now, Chip and Kim admit, are they aware that, outside the US, "Amazing Race" rates highest in Canada, New Zealand/Australia and the Philippines. They expressed appreciation to their Filipino fans.

* * *

DURING the penultimate episode, at the Malaguena jeepney factory in Cavite, Chip and Kim brought the level of competition up a notch when they used the "Yield" on Colin and Christie, who up till then had dominated the race and arrived first at practically every pit stop. The two Texans, who had been dating for a year when they joined the race, were certainly vocal about feeling "betrayed" by Chip and Kim.

"There's still a certain level of animosity" between them and the Texans, admits Kim. "They were just so intense about the whole thing. From the beginning, Chip and I agreed that we were just going to enjoy ourselves and embark on this adventure, and winning was just going to be the gravy. But Colin and Christie were so focused on the prize money that when they lost, they felt they had ended up with nothing."

Asked who their favorite competitive team was, Kim replied, "Oh, no doubt about it, Marshall and Lance. We always got along very well and tried to help each other as much as we could." The brothers, who got eliminated midway, own a pizza shop in Dallas.

Chip, 46, and Kim, 44, are the oldest participants to win the Amazing Race. "We don't feel old at all," protests Chip, "in fact we feel very young." Though they concede the other teams used their youth and fitness to put themselves ahead in the game, Chip says, "We didn't feel handicapped by our age at all. We decided to play a mental game, to outwit the others and plan better." Not once did they ever feel like losing, they say, "although there were times early in the race when we made pretty stupid mistakes."

* * *

AS THEY promised soon after reaching the finish line, Chip and Kim have "tithed" part of their prize money to their church, the Jubilee South Port. But aside from "Chip having to have his toys for the big boys, like an iPod and a laptop," says Kim, they have decided to set aside the larger part of their $1-million prize money.

Married for over 25 years now, Chip, who owns an Internet company, and Kim, who owns her own information technology recruitment firm, have three children: Elon, 23, Phillip III, 19 and Kristen, 17. Told they're soon to be "empty nesters," Chip joked that he didn't mind this at all. "Don't get me wrong, they're great kids, but we won't stop them if they want to strike off on their own and get on with their own lives."

Doubtless, as they showed throughout the race, Chip and Kim will weather this stage in their life with humor, grace and optimism, proving that they're real winners, not just in a race around the world, competing against 10 other teams, but also in the race of life.

A sordid and painful tale

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

NEWSPAPERS are often described as "history in a hurry." Today's current events become tomorrow's history.

Whenever I read old newspapers, some from as far back as the late 19th century, it is natural to compare and contrast them with the papers of today. For example, we all learn about the Reform or Propaganda Movement in school, and our textbooks emphasize the efforts of the fighting newspaper La Solidaridad. The bylines in this newspaper are like a roster of heroes: Jose Rizal, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Graciano Lopez Jaena, Antonio Luna and Mariano Ponce.

When I first came face to face with an actual copy of Solidaridad, I was surprised, and somewhat disappointed that it wasn't a daily and wasn't broadsheet. It wasn't even the size of a tabloid. By today's standards, the fortnightly Solidaridad would be considered a newsletter. This simple experience made me realize that reading historical sources requires shifting gears, that you take the past on its own terms and not read about the past with the hindsight, bias and comfort of the 21st century.

Aside from physical size, of course, there is the editorial slant. Why are some articles printed and others rejected? Why do the articles sound the way they do? Evaluating content is something we do for any newspaper new or old, but reading the INQUIRER today makes me wonder what a future historian will see and say about our times. What will future historians make of the explosive (I would say, libelous) Gretchen Barretto interview in the INQUIRER last Saturday? If it is any indication of readership that crosses boundaries, my jaded, 79-year-old father, who isn't interested in show biz or society gossip, recommended that I read it after one of his golf cronies told him that expatriate Pinoys who read the INQUIRER on the Net got the news even before we get our newspapers here in the Philippines. I only read the paper on Monday because I spent the weekend in Odiongan, Romblon, where I had no television and newspapers to distract me from a reading seminar I participated in.

While I have always had a nose for scandal in history, I find that the primary sources are often discreet, the secondary sources silent on things that make our heroes human: Juan Luna murdering his wife and mother-in-law in a jealous rage; Jose Rizal and the women he left at every port he visited; Gregorio del Pilar and the different letters and perfumed embroidered handkerchiefs found on his body in Tirad Pass, etc. When there is little or no material, the historical vacuum can be filled with malice and conjecture: Apolinario Mabini and the sexual cause of his paralysis; Antonio Luna leaving a bag filled with revolutionary funds with a certain Ysidra that became the source of the Cojuangco fortune; Andres Bonifacio having a love-child in a place appropriately called Libog, Albay; Rizal's one-night-stand in Vienna that resulted in Adolf Hitler. Unlike urban legends that have a strand or semblance of truth somewhere, historical myths are more enduring. The more outrageous and the crazier the story the more people want to believe it, like that yarn about Rizal being the father of Hitler.

Reading the Gretchen Barretto interview made me wish journalists were more forward a century ago so that we would not be left guessing. For example, the closest we can get to Gretchen's plight (real or imagined) is Josephine Bracken who was not accepted by Rizal's family, with the exception of one or two sisters. After Rizal's death, she sued Teodora Alonso claiming that the family cheated her of her inheritance that included all of the Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo paintings in Rizal's modest art collection, the library he left in Hong Kong in the care of Jose Ma. Basa, and some cash. She gave two interviews to the Hong Kong press in 1897 regarding her military exploits in Cavite that are quite doubtful. Not much is said about the cold shoulder treatment that she mentioned in a letter dated Aug. 13, 1896. Rizal was en route to Cuba from Dapitan, he had a stop-over in Manila but was not allowed to disembark so Josephine tried to send all of her lover's *bilin* that included *lansones*, collars, cuffs, mangoes, cheese etc. In this rather sorry letter she wrote:

"...Ah! My dear I am suffering a great deal with them [Rizal's family] in Trozo, it is quite true they ought to be ashamed of me as they say in my face & in Presenance (*sic*) of Sra. Narcisa & their children because I am not married to you. So if you heare (*sic*) that I don't go to Trozo any more, don't be surpized (*sic*)...If you go to Spain [and find] any one of your fancy you better marry her, but deare heare (*sic*) me better marry than to live like who we have been doing. I am not ashamed to let people know my life with you but as your dear Sisters are ashamed I think you had better get married to some one else. Your Sister and your Father they are very good and kind to me."

Earlier Rizal had written a letter of introduction for her stating that he wished that she be treated well as he cared for her.

We will never know what Rizal's mother thought of Josephine because she was not interviewed by the INQUIRER, but from various pieces of correspondence we try and piece together a sordid tale that was too painful to record in the 19th century but comes so easily in our time.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Gov't: too much or too little?

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I'M going to write today as someone in government, being the chair of the anthropology department at the state-run University of the Philippines.

Austerity is the byword these days in government agencies, with all kinds of memos being issued on what can be done, from cutting back on electricity to a freeze in hiring. There is much talk, too, about outright abolition of government agencies and corporations.

I agree that we need to stave off a possible fiscal crisis and that many of the suggested reforms are long overdue, but I worry too that we might be jumping out of the frying pan into the fire with many of these measures.

Sacrificing social services

What's so disturbing about these measures is that they are applied across the board, to all institutions, with no consideration, it seems, given to the type of services being offered by a particular agency.

Some of these measures are not new. For example, as early as three years ago, we were already told at UP to expect an annual reduction in our institutional operations budget, and to look for outside grants to cover the deficits. Never mind that UP is supposed to be training the brightest of young Filipinos, entering each year in larger numbers even as we're told now to reduce our staffing complement by not hiring new staff to replace those who have retired.

It's always social services—health and nutrition, education, social welfare—that suffer the most with these austerity measures. The reason is that in the general budgetary allocations, social services already receive far lower budgets than what's needed. So when austerity measures are instituted, the already serious deficits widen.

When we sacrifice these social services, we pay for them dearly over the long term. Whenever I despair over the reports of some of my staff, whether because of bad grammar or an outright inability to organize ideas, I have to remind myself that these are the products of a university whose budget has been dwindling over the years, going as far back as the 1980s as government funds were diverted to debt service.

Likewise, when I encounter young people who don't know the most basic facts about health (I have been asked how tuberculosis is spread, again by UP students), I have to remind myself we have a health department whose budget in the last 20 years has been so small there's nothing left for public education.

A better time

It hasn't been always this way, mind you. Older Filipinos remember a time when government salaries were not only adequate but comfortable. Over the weekend, I talked with a woman in Roxas district, Quezon City, who owned a house and lot she had inherited from her father who had, in turn, purchased the lot in 1949 from the government, on affordable terms. And his work? He was a bill collector for Nawasa, the government water agency.

There are thousands of other families scattered throughout the country, given all kinds of chances by government to lift themselves up by their bootstraps, whether through housing loans or government scholarships.

Sure, those opportunities still exist, but reduced government budgets, amid a growing population, have reduced the per capita benefits. The woman I was interviewing is an example: the house and lot was much too small to be divided up among her siblings so she had to pay the others their share. But she now worries about the future of her own children. Government financing schemes are too small now so she has to rent out rooms in her house. Nearly all her neighbors seem to be doing something similar to make ends meet, from renting out rooms to selling phone cards. I know one woman who even raises purebred dogs to sell in the small backyard space she has.

Missing infrastructure

Monday's newspaper headlines talked about the possible abolition of 15 government corporations supposedly because they are incurring huge deficits. At the top of the list were the National Food Authority with a P7.6-billion deficit and the Light Rail Transit Authority which was in the red by P3.8 billion.

I'd ask, though, are these deficits or are these necessary social subsidies? Mass transit is a social investment, too, and I don't mind my taxes going toward subsidizing this social cost. It cuts down on traffic, on pollution, and provides a very basic service for many Filipinos.

Likewise, the NFA helps to provide affordable rice to consumers while providing rice farmers higher incomes. (I know, though, rice farmers do deserve more than what they're getting, but there's another political game behind all this.)

Run through the list of government corporations that could be axed, and you'll find nearly all of them actually offer some kind of social subsidy, whether for housing or providing livelihood skills training.

When we call on government to cut back on spending, we presume that the problem is too much government. I contend that the country's problems comes with government doing too little. Rather than a wholesale cutback on expenses, government has to do two things:

First, it has to base its budget on realistic priorities that look to the future. This means more infusions of funds into social services, or at least maintaining existing budgets.

Second, and this relates to the first suggestion I made, government has to look where the leakages are coming from, such as incompetence and corruption. Then it should find ways to ease out the bad eggs by upgrading performance standards and actual prosecution of the corrupt. Right now, government talks about an early retirement scheme to reduce its ranks. But the last time they did this, we lost some of our best professors at the University of the Philippines, people who had grown weary of the low salaries and the inhospitable working environment and were just waiting for a chance to leave gracefully.

Developed countries all got to where they are today because of massive subsidies of social services, from education and health to mass transport and even postal services. The move to privatize these services is fairly recent and, unfortunately, is being prematurely foisted on countries like the Philippines.

We wonder why we're flooded with cheap Chinese imports. It's simple: Cheap Chinese labor made possible by 50 years of government support for basic social services so that even with low salaries, a Chinese worker need not fear starvation, or a lack of housing, or of having to pull a child out of school. China's social services were, and still are, the infrastructure for its economic resurgence today.

I wonder if the President or her advisers saw that during her last visit to China.

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LETTERS

‘Inventive’ lawmakers

BY FILING a graft case before the Ombudsman against Rep. Rolex Suplico, GSIS president Winston Garcia confirmed public suspicions that many lawmakers are misusing the congressional power to investigate to amass wealth and set-up sweetheart deals for groups they lobby for.

Garcia's allegation that Kimberly Clark Philippines was forced to buy a piece of property owned by the family of Suplico's wife is very serious. That Suplico used the investigative power of Congress to bear pressure on Kimberly Clark, as claimed by Garcia, did not come as a surprise. Congressmen are known to invent reasons—in the case of Kimberly Clark its supposed violation of environmental laws—to get the "proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow." The perceived modus operandi of these unprincipled lawmakers is to deliver a privilege speech denouncing private persons and institutions and then filing a resolution calling for an investigation.

This is the reason why congressional inquiries are *lima-singko* (five for five centavos). These inquiries "in aid of legislation" are turned into inquisitorial hearings by our lawmakers to force their intended victims to capitulate.

Congressmen Suplico and Eduardo Veloso, the supposed lobbyist for reinsurance brokers wanting to get the P500-million reinsurance of the National Power Corp. from the Government Service Insurance System, have a lot of explaining to do.

—MARIO OPIS,
23 Santolan St., Mandaluyong City

DPWH clarifies lahar threat

THIS has reference to the news item, "UP geologist warns against lahar flow." (PDI, 8/26/04)

We appreciate geologist Kevin Rodolfo's concern about the threat of lahar in Pampanga.

However, the Department of Public Works and Highways, would like to take exception to his statement, "all it would take is for several hours of rain to set loose the accumulated lahar in Porac and other low lying areas of Pampanga." OIC-director Maria Catalina Cabral, of DPWH's Mount Pinatubo Emergency Project Management Office, wishes to make this clear—on the basis of a report from Pinatubo Hazard Urgent Mitigation Project consultant Shigeru Maruyama—that the threat of devastating lahar flows triggered by heavy monsoon rains and typhoons has been successfully mitigated in the past by constructing Pinatubo dike structures. Even Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology director Raymundo Punongbayan commented, during a dialogue with local officials and residents of the town of Bacolor, that the town is already considered a low-risk area, although this does not mean that it is already safe from the possibility of any lahar flows, as floods must definitely still be expected.

Regarding damages to structures, the DPWH has done the immediate remedial measures by constructing spur dikes made up of sandbags and bamboo materials fortified with gabions in order to deflect the flow of water.

In addition, the constructed structures are designed in accordance with the guidelines, standards and engineering practices accepted worldwide. A structure may be damaged if the magnitude of the flood is greater than that for which it has been designed. This is the reason why the government provides funds for the cost of operation, repair and maintenance of the completed structure.

We hope that this would clarify the issues raised by the news item.

—JENNIFER D. PUNZALAN,
officer in charge,
Public Information Division,
Department of Public Works and
Highways, A. Bonifacio Drive,
Port Area, Manila

Is there hope for the return of the Balangiga bells?

LAST Sept. 28 was the 103rd anniversary of the Balangiga encounter in Balangiga, Samar.

As the designer and builder of the Balangiga Monument (consisting of a belfry and an open church door) symbolic of the Filipino fighters attack on the American soldiers, the launching of which was signaled with the tolling of bells, I had to cast two big bronze bells for the belfry.

It took more than a hundred years to honor the Filipino and American soldiers who fought and died on Sept. 28, 1901.

When will the two bells, which the American soldiers carted away as war booty, be returned and re-mounted on the belfry of the Catholic Church of Balangiga.

The priceless head of Queen Nefertiti, which used to be displayed at the Berlin Museum, has long been returned to the Cairo National Museum. Are the Germans more civil and cultured than the Americans?

—NAPOLEON VELOSO ABUEVA,
national artist,
1 Gabriela Silang St., Tierra Verde,
Culiat, Quezon City

Reservations about oil price hikes

INDEED, in a deregulated market that is totally dependent on imported oil, no amount of moral suasion from the government, much less from the public, may prevail upon the local oil firms from increasing their prices whenever the world crude prices and/or the foreign exchange rates assume new highs. Whether the Oil Deregulation Law was ill-advised or not is irrelevant at this point. More relevant is that the government need not be too hopelessly resigned to accept as gospel truth the validity of each new price hike.

As a layman, I have endlessly wondered why the local oil industry players—major and minor alike—always announce new pump prices with precise simultaneity. It is a matter of common sense to expect otherwise. Like all other business establishments, they have different operating variables, of which inventory—carrying capacity is most critical in inflationary times. With comparatively less oil storage capability, the minor industry players should be more immediately sensitive to oil price change, and are thus likely to react more urgently. But on the contrary, the oil majors often either beat them in the price-change race or, if they don't, simply follow in a day or two. It may be argued that the oil majors have the larger share of the oil market, and this negates their obvious oil storage advantage. But only superficially! My little learning from business management gives me enough reason to refuse to believe that the oil majors have not been all along using their huge tanks to store more oil procured at lower price to maximize profits before crude prices escalate anew. Without this monumental oil pricing absurdity, the oil consumers could have had a wider breathing space, at least in the interim, that the major gas stations have not raised their pump prices. Neither, under the situation, may the oil majors be accused of predatory pricing. First, because given their much lower operating costs, the smaller oil firms do not totally lose the flexibility to match the prices of the bigger ones. Second, isn't oil price competition the essential objective of the Oil Deregulation Law?

Having said the above, I am constrained to agree with Senate President Franklin Drilon that the Department of Energy has pathetically failed to help lighten the onus of the global price volatility of crude on the shoulder of the oil-consuming public. That is, other than by merely requesting—nay, begging—the oil industry to soften a bit their periodic price adjustments. The government could have performed better, as there are many ways to skin a cat. One is probably to put each upcoming oil price hike under meticulous DOE scrutiny. Another is to enact the appropriate anti-trust laws to make more effective, rather than repeal, the Oil Deregulation Law. But everything lies on strong political will.

—RUDY L. CORONEL,
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Golden Country Homes,
Alangilan, Batangas City

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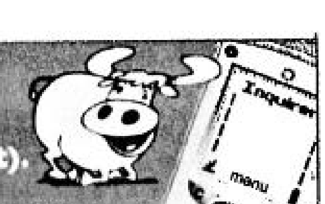

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
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Remembering Cabalantian tragedy

By Tonette Orejas
Bacolor, Pampanga

TAMALES, puto séko, mamon, mamon tostado, suman tili, suman bulagta, kutsinta, biku, ebun buru, tostadong mani and *achara*.

If you happen to meet Sol Bengco on J.P. Rizal Street near the Makati City Hall selling these native delicacies from Cabalantian in Bacolor, Pampanga, do not hesitate to buy.

Women, like Bengco, and her foodstuffs, and the family-based enterprises they have sustained are helping rebuild Barangay Cabalantian. This is no easy feat, considering the villagers' brush with death.

What befell the village on Oct. 1 nine years ago was the worst in recent history. The most catastrophic avalanches of Mount Pinatubo's lahar occurred in Cabalantian.

The series of lahar rampages left hot deposits of up to nine meters high, burying the entire village, including 2,000 houses, 500 vehicles, and a large—but debatable—number of people, said American sociologist Dr. Kathleen Crittenden.

Erased from map

In just two days, Cabalantian was erased from the map. Residents survived by staying on the roofs of two-story houses. Others swam through lahar.

When the volcanic sediments hardened, others walked on it, skipping soft spots or finding the direction by holding on to the cables of Philippine Long Distance Co.

As in other disasters, they showed that victims were the first to respond, not the government.

On Thursday night, on the eve of what went down in local history as the Cabalantian tragedy, Bengco finished cooking her specialties.

Masses have been held since 2000 to commemorate the tragedy, to remember the departed, to celebrate life and to reunite with neighbors and relatives dispersed in seven resettlement areas all over Pampanga, said barangay chair Jomar Hizon.

This year, the Mass was held in a new chapel, built on donations of Cabalantian residents and their supporters.

"[I did not attend the Mass because] I had to work, sell the foodstuffs. Life is so hard now," Bengco said.

200 families

Hizon said the village now had 200 families. That's 15 percent of the population before the 1995 disaster.

Like Bengco, 50 women in the village have resumed the enterprise developed from Bacolor's rich culinary tradition and nurtured by generations of women.

In Barangays Santa Lucia and San Isidro in Magalang, Arenas and Buensoseso in Arayat, Bulaon in the City of San Fernando, and Pabanlag in Floridablanca, hundreds more women are in the same business.

"They employ a lot of people. Those who are based in Cabalantian draw their relatives back to the village because the jobs are here," Hizon said.

Most of the vendors are men who sell the delicacies in residential villages, public markets, gasoline stations, near fast food centers, snack houses and offices in Metro Manila and Central Luzon, he said.

Coping by cooking

Beyond the employment they create, they teach international and local disaster management experts a lesson: cooking; and making a living out of it, is a good way of coping with and overcoming the disaster.

Older Cabalantian cooks, like Consolacion Reyes ("Apong Cion" to many), also helped rescue the villagers in 1995.

Starting work as early as 3 a.m., they were the first to alert the villagers about the threat.

"We woke everybody up as the water (from the Gugu Dike that burst) began reaching knee-high. Then the first lahar flow came. Just when we thought it was over, another flow came. And another. And another. Until we were all marooned on roofs," Reyes, 81, recalled.

Before the tragedy, Cabalantian earned fame for churning out the best delicacies in Pampanga. Foodstuffs that are sold in the streets or stamped with the name of the village were guaranteed delicious.

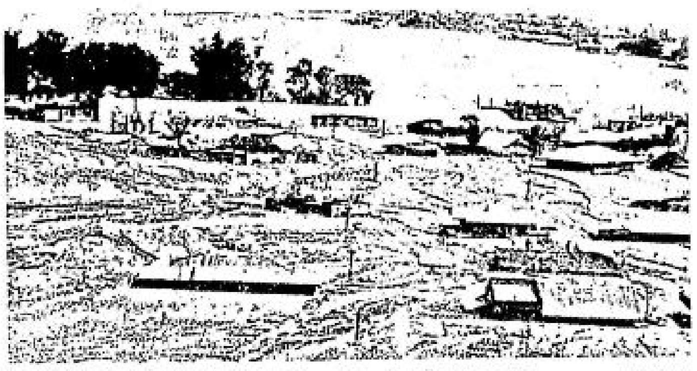
Lydia Miranda-Koh, 65, learned cooking the delicacies through her mother, Marciana. She remembered that back then, these foods were not sold. "They were served during feasts and special occasions or gifts to guests," Koh said.

Enterprising women

She did not know when exactly the trade began but this, she said, attested to the fact that Cabalantian women were enterprising even as their husbands tended to their farms and other jobs.

In her case, she turned to cooking when her husband, a meat vendor, fell ill.

Back then, the bestsellers *mamon* and *mamon tostado* were cooked the old-fashioned way, in *urno*. These clay ovens are half the size of igloos and use wood as fuel. The *urnos* are made in nearby Santo Tomas town where the pottery business has thrived.



"LAHARSCAPE" in Cabalantian, Bacolor, Pampanga THE VOICE

Duck eggs were used to give the sweet-tasting bread the natural orange color. These were beaten by hand, using wires bent in the shape of a flower.

The flour was manually mixed. The *mamon* is much sought after because they are stomach filling.

Mamon tostado is more physically taxing for the bread, cooked flat, garnished with margarine, and returned to the *urno* to obtain the crisp taste.

Tamales, also known as *boboto*, is basically grounded rice topped with slices of chicken meat, eggs, whole peanuts and sweetened peanut sauce. These are all wrapped in banana leaves.

The *suman—bulagta* or *tili*—is made of glutinous rice.

Cabalantian also made the best salted eggs complete with natural oil. This was done by burying eggs in mud for days.

Because lahar claimed all the *urnos*, the women have replaced these with electric ovens.

The technology has been refined but the women say they always try so much to get the same results.

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FISHING
A fisherman goes through his daily routine at a fishing village in Santander town in Cebu facing Dumaguete. Fishing is the main source of income of residents in the town.
VAL HANDUMON/PDI PHOTO

Envoys get tight security in Davao

DAVAO CITY—Authorities have tightened the security in the city as foreign and local tourists are here to witness the Wow Mindanao Exposition.

Col. Eduardo del Rosario, Task Force Davao commander, said he has coordinated with the Davao City Police Office (DCPO) in deploying more security personnel to strategic areas.

"We have secured the buildings where our visitors are and have provided all the support to DCPO," Del Rosario said, taking note that the city has been teeming with visitors, including foreign diplomats.

Five Latin American ambassadors and members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference arrived last week in Cotabato City and came to this city Sunday night to witness the Pangapog Gala at the SM City grounds, the main site of the Mindanao Expo.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone also arrived Monday and his visit was expected to be welcomed by protest actions from progressive leftist groups.

Del Rosario said he has ordered the soldiers to observe maximum tolerance in dealing with the protesting groups.

"Maximum tolerance will be implemented. Otherwise, they will shout again for human rights violation," Del Rosario said.

City Administrator Wendel Avisado said that by the end of the month, five ambassadors from European countries will also arrive.

Terrorists have struck in Davao, setting off bombs at the city's international airport and a wharf, killing dozens of people.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Filipinos in US raise money for classrooms

By TJ Burgonio

HOPING to ease the acute shortage of classrooms back home, Filipinos in New York have raised some $24,000 for the construction of six classrooms, including four in a former war-torn village in Mindanao.

The Filipinos handed the check worth $24,142.75 to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo during a meeting at the Philippine Center in New York last week. Romulo was in New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly.

The sum was intended for the "Adopt-a-Classroom Project" of the Philippine Consulate in New York, foreign affairs officials said.

Much of it would be used for the construction of four classrooms in Barangay Inug-ug, a poor village in Pagalungan, Maguindanao which had been torn by clashes between government troops and secessionist guerrillas in the past.

Now a peace zone, Inug-ug is home to 600 children and adults who are attending classes in makeshift classrooms.

Educational TV

One of the donors specified that $1,000 of the amount be allotted for the setting up of an educational television infrastructure at the Inug-ug Elementary School under the Educational TV project of network giant ABS-CBN.

"It once again demonstrates that Filipinos in the US have not forgotten the noble Filipino *bayanihan* spirit. The donation comes from the heart of the Filipino expatriate community in the New York area," Consul General Cecilia Rebong said in a statement.

A portion of the fund would be allotted for the construction of a classroom each in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and Bulacan.

"By focusing on ARMM and helping in the education agenda of the President, we are also doing our share to promote peace and development in the region," Rebong said.

Romulo expressed gratitude to the Filipino expatriates for their donation, saying he was "deeply touched by the kindness and generosity of the Filipino community."

"The donation would go a long way in preparing children in Barangay Inug-ug and other areas for a brighter tomorrow," he said, recalling that he had seen many children attending classes "under the most dreadful conditions" in depressed areas.

Classrooms, classrooms

The project, which was relaunched by Rebong early this year, was designed to draw support from the Filipino-American community for the construction of classrooms in poor, far-flung areas.

Many Filipino-Americans have welcomed the project, saying it was a good opportunity for them to provide the youth back home with decent classrooms "conducive to learning."

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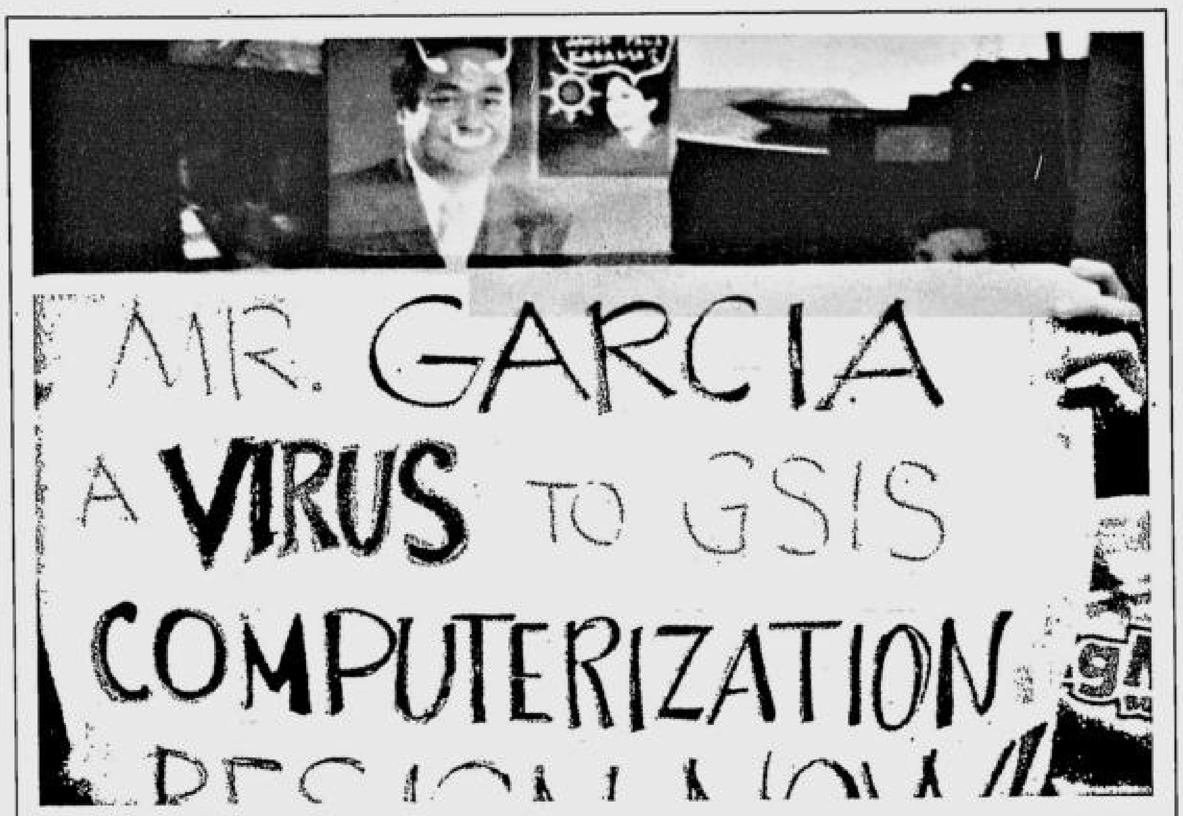

NESTOR BURGOS/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

ILOILO PROTEST
Workers of the GSIS in Iloilo City rally in front of the GSIS office there to demand the resignation of GSIS head Winston Garcia.

Teachers press House for increase in salaries

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—"My take-home pay can no longer take me home!"

Bearing placards with this message, some 500 leaders of public schoolteachers in six Central Luzon provinces left this city on Tuesday for a protest caravan to the House of Representatives in time for the 10th World Teachers' Day.

They said they would ask for the passage of a bill, pending in the last 14 years, seeking to upgrade the teachers' salary from P9,939 (salary grade 10) to P16,792 (salary grade 19).

James Pagaduan, spokesperson of the Action and Solidarity for the Empowerment of Teachers (Assert), said the House committee on education had recommended as early as 1991 to "correct the error in rank."

The so-called error happened when teachers were assigned salary grade 10 under the salary standardization law or Republic Act 6758.

Pagaduan said at grade 10, the law placed teachers in the same category as that of sergeants in the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"The only qualification for a sergeant is to be a high school graduate. In the case of teachers, we need to be college graduates and we need to pass the licensure examination to be considered eligible. The salary upgrade is therefore fair and just because teachers worked hard to get degrees and eligibilities," Pagaduan said.

He said bills have been filed and refiled from the 8th to the 12th Congress.

"No single bill ever got past the committee level," he said.

Assert pushed for the passage of the bill during its Sept. 3 assembly in Angeles City.

Zambales Rep. Ma. Milagros Magsaysay has proposed a new bill to upgrade the teachers' salary.

Pagaduan said Magsaysay's bill is expected to benefit some 400,000 public schoolteachers in the country.

The fiscal crisis, he said, should not be used as an excuse by the government for not raising salaries and benefits.

"With over half the national budget going to debt servicing and corruption, we are infuriated by the delay in our salary upgrades," Pagaduan said in a statement.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

ROUNDUP

2 NPA rebels yield

LUCENA CITY—Two suspected members of the New People's Army operating in Rizal province surrendered to the military. In a report, Maj. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, commander of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division based in Tanay, Rizal, identified the former rebels as Mel Francisco alias "Ka Arnel" and Adolfo Zonio alias "Ka Lito," both belonging to the NPA Narciso Antazo-Aramil Command. The rebels surrendered two shotguns with bullets and a hand grenade. The report said the two were members of the armed propaganda unit, which is in charge of the NPA's propaganda and recruitment work.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Woman cop found dead

CAUAYAN CITY—A policewoman was found dead by her relatives on Sept. 28 inside her room in Barangay San Fermin here. Supt. Delfin Milio, police chief of this city, said PO1 Emma Andoy, 29, of the Cauayan police, tied a rope around her neck and hung herself. Andoy's relatives said they were commemorating the second death anniversary of Andoy's father when they found her dead. They said Andoy, who had recently delivered her third child, had a history of depression.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

3 killed in mishaps

CAUAYAN CITY—Three persons were killed and five others were hurt in separate road accidents here last week. Supt. Delfin Milio, police chief here, identified the fatalities as Jose Dauba, Marcelino Teaño and Freddie Udanga. Reports said Teaño and Udanga were riding a motorcycle on the national highway in Barangay Minante Dos when a jeepney driven by Larry Ramos hit them. In another incident, police said Robert Tejada, who was driving a van, sideswiped Dauba, a garbage collector, while Dauba was crossing a street. Dauba died at the Garcia Hospital here.

Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Militiaman found dead

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Residents of a far-flung village in Sta. Cruz, Laguna on Friday found a decomposing body of a militiaman believed to be summarily executed by communist rebels, police said. Laguna police director Senior Supt. Edwin Corvera, said the body of Floro Agapay, 28, was found in an uninhabited area in Sitio Maulawin, Barangay Duhat. It bore several bullet wounds in the face and chest from a still unidentified firearm. Corvera said Agapay was a member of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit and served as intelligence officer of the Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade based in Siniloan, Laguna.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Forester's killer held

DAVAO CITY—The suspected gunman in last Tuesday's murder of a forester of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources here is now in police custody, authorities reported Thursday. Chief Supt. Simeon Dizon, Southern Mindanao police chief, said Moises Potal, 41, a resident of Barangay Lizada in Toril District was positively identified by the niece of Isidro de la Peña as the killer. De la Peña was driving his niece to school when he was shot to death in Matina in Talomo District. Potal, a former rebel, allegedly served as a bodyguard of former Land Transportation Office director for Davao Leo Magno. The suspect denied any involvement in the death of De la Peña, who police said was very strict in the implementation of forestry laws.

Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Biak-na-Bato security

SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan—Gov. Josefina de la Cruz said lifeguards and rescue teams should be sent to monitor visitors in the Biak-na-Bato National Historical Park and its river to avoid a repeat of an accident here last month where eight people, most of them children, drowned in the river. De la Cruz said the provincial government and other concerned agencies could not just order the closure of the park to visitors because this is one of the most popular recreation and tourist destinations in the province. She asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which maintains the park, to disseminate information on safety to prevent accidents.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Benguet officials file case to stop trade pact with China

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The Benguet Mayors' League and the Benguet provincial government have gone to court to stop Malacañang's plan to sign a bilateral trade agreement with China.

Judge Benigno Galacgac of the regional trial court here is hearing the mayors' Sept. 25 petition for preliminary injunction, which opposes a quarantine agreement that will enable the country to sell homegrown pineapple to China, in exchange for the entry of Chinese carrots.

La Trinidad Mayor Nestor Fongwan, BML president, said they were alerted to the agreement's scheduled signing on Sept. 25, which prompted them to go to court.

He said the BML wants locally grown carrots to be protected by long-term policy safeguards against globalization because sale of this vegetable suffered the most when both smuggled and legally imported vegetables flooded Metro Manila markets between 2001 and 2003.

But the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry said an injunction might be too preemptive because the government was still negotiating for selected trade items, and might not yet include importable and exportable vegetables at all.

Noemi Saludo, PCCI president, announced before the 13th North Luzon Area Business Conference last month that Malacañang was ready to sign the controversial China early harvest program (EHP) in January next year, which opens the country to selected Chinese products.

She said producers of local coconut byproducts, bananas and mangoes have a large market potential in China, which already imports from Indonesia and some western countries.

Ambassador Donald Dee, presidential envoy for international trade relations, said President Macapagal-Arroyo did not sign a Chinese bilateral pact when it was first offered to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2002 because of the notion that local industries "are just not ready for trade."

Ms Arroyo received the brunt of a sustained national protest against globalization, which farmers from Benguet and Mt. Province led to push for better terms during the recent round of World Trade Organization talks in Mexico.

Dee, former president of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, said the government "correctly took a backseat" for a year to monitor developments in the region, unlike nine Asean member countries that proceeded to trade with China.

But without the bilateral pact, Dee said the country's coconut exports are now being sold to China at prices 15 to 27 percent higher than Indonesia's 10 percent rates.

Philippine competitors in Asean will be able to reduce prices to 5 percent next year, but the country's products will be more expensive unless a pact is signed in January, Saludo said.

Southcom chief halts Army plan for big offensive

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The Southern Command chief yesterday stepped in to prevent a major Army offensive against Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels in Maguindanao.

Col. Gerry Jalandoni of the Army's 604th Infantry Brigade based in the province had earlier threatened to attack the base of the MILF's 109th Infantry Brigade within 72 hours unless the rebel group turned over the suspects in Saturday's ambush-killing of a sergeant in Mamasapano town.

Jalandoni had also asked the MILF to turn over the firearm and personal belongings of Sgt. Charles Molina. The ultimatum lapsed 2:30 p.m Tuesday.

Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, the Southcom chief, said he talked with Jalandoni on Tuesday afternoon after reporters asked him about the threat. He advised the officer to bring his issue to the Joint Committee on the Cessation of Hostilities (CCCH).

"I asked him to exhaust all means of settling the issue in a peaceful and proper way," Senga said.

Senga said Jalandoni pledged not to take drastic action anymore.

Molina was on his way home aboard his motorcycle when the rebels fired at him in Barangay Tinantangan in Mamasapano, according to Jalandoni.

He said the suspects, under Commander Adan of the MILF's 104th IB and not Walid of the MILF's 109th IB as he had earlier claimed, took the soldier's handgun, personal belongings and motorcycle.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said Jalandoni's statements were "impulsive and counter-productive."

The rebel group has embarked on peace talks with the government. Officials from both sides said the negotiations could resume this month after issues causing its delay had been settled.

Peace prospects were also boosted by the arrival this week of a 60-man international ceasefire monitoring team headed by Malaysia.

Kuala Lumpur, which gave sanctuary to Moro rebels in the early years of conflict in certain areas of Mindanao, was brokering the peace talks with the backing of the influential Organization of the Islamic Conference. *Edwin Fernandez, Charlie Señase, Julie Alipala and Germelina Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Kin of 8 women killed in fire demand justice

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Demands for justice rang out loud on Monday from the families of eight women who died in last Saturday's fire at a supermarket in this city's business district.

Jun Gutierrez, whose elder sister Lerma was one of those trapped at the Popong Suerte Mart, said the Bureau of Fire Protection should explain why it was not able to immediately rescue the victims.

In his visit on Monday to the separate wakes held for the victims, Gov. Mark Lapid said the relatives had asked him to help them obtain justice.

The victims' charred remains, tightly sealed in wood boxes, were recovered from a room at the building's third floor almost 12 hours after the fire broke out at 3:35 p.m. on Saturday.

The city's fire station is less than 100 meters east of the supermarket.

Workers who survived the fire lighted eight big candles in front of the supermarket where eight of their fellow workers died.

Mayor Oscar Rodriguez on Saturday night confirmed in a statement that low water pressure made it difficult for firemen to fill their trucks.

The investigating committee he formed also on Saturday sought to know the reason for this, Rodriguez said.

At least 20 trucks and about 50 firemen from all over Pampanga responded to the fire alarm, Supt. Emmanuel Arrozal, provincial fire marshal, said.

He denied that the water supply was inadequate during the first hours of the fire-fighting mission.

Arrozal said the firemen drew water directly from the two hydrants of the City of San Fernando Water District on B. Mendoza Street here.

However, he confirmed that the hydrant in front of a drug store and which was dedicated to the city fire station did not work during the crucial hours.

Gutierrez also said the liability of his sister's employers, identified as Marichu Choi and Tony Co, should be established. On Saturday, Arrozal told the INQUIRER that the fire escape door of the supermarket was locked and that all its windows had grills.

Arrozal said the fire-fighting mission proved more difficult because the second floor, which served as a warehouse, was also filled with many combustible merchandise like cooking oil and candles.

Rodriguez said although the owners had not complied with several fire safety standards as early as 1996, previous officials still issued them a mayor's permit.

The owners have yet to issue a formal statement on the incident. Chief Insp. Mario Racadio, city fire marshall, said arson investigators began work on Monday.

Gutierrez said the kind of death his sister met was not only untimely but also painful. Lerma was identified through her porcelain tooth. She worked at the supermarket for six years as a cashier and had set her marriage possibly next year, he said. The sister of Victoria Malipico, 37, expressed worry over the three young children of her sister.

"What will happen to them now?" she asked. Five of the women were married and like Malipico, had children to rear. The eighth fatality was not a man but a woman named Desiree Vitug, 32, of Angeles City.

Her remains were claimed late Sunday, the Torno Funeral Homes said. *Tonette Orejas and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Napocor blames Senate for woes

TIWI, Albay—A top official of the government-owned National Power Corp. has blamed the Senate for the state company's sorry state.

Reynaldo Santiago, Napocor vice president for geothermal generation, recalled that in the early 1970s until the mid-1980s, Napocor used to be in the list of the country's top corporations.

"We used to be in the country's list of top corporations in those times, and our downfall today is courtesy of the senators themselves," said Santiago. He did not elaborate.

Santiago was here at a ceremony for the change of the name of Philippine Geothermal Inc. into Unocal Philippines Inc. (UPI).

UPI is wholly owned subsidiary of the Union Oil of California.

UPI and Napocor developed geothermal resources at the Tiwi field in Albay province and the Makiling-Banahaw (Mak-Ban) field in the Laguna and Batangas area.

This led to the birth of geothermal energy in the country.

Santiago said this development (name-change from PGI to UPI) is actually a transformation to a better company.

He added that it was one of the best examples of business cooperation between the Philippines and the US.

He said he wished the company would be privatized under Unocal. *Ronnie Lorejo, PDI S. Luzon Bureau*

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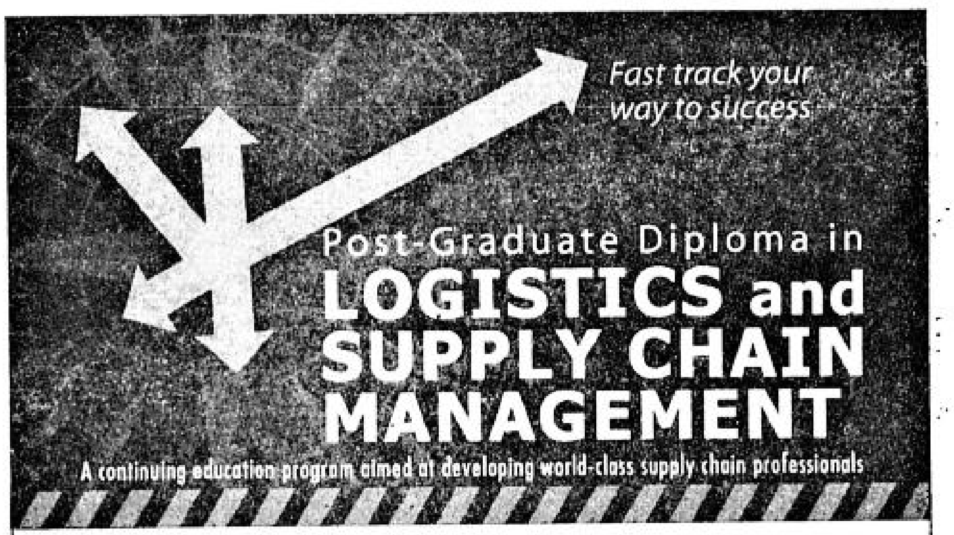
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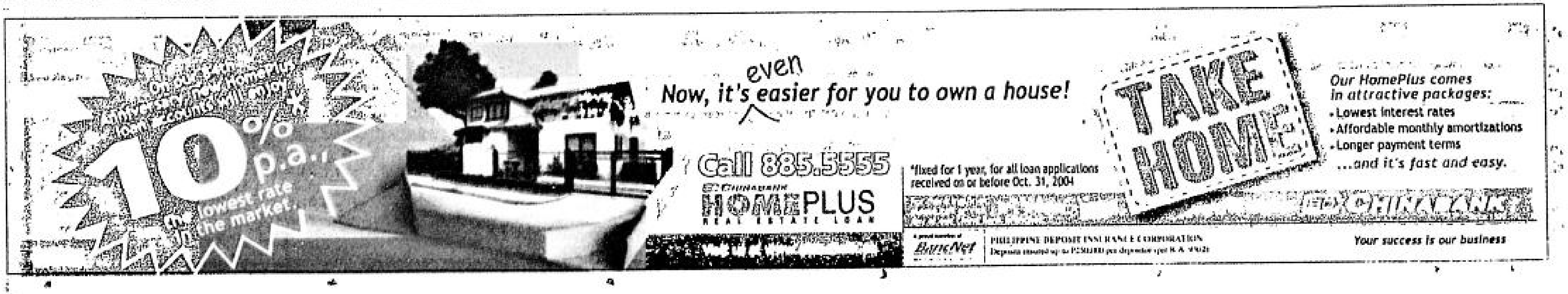
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Policemen feed kids with a good impression

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

GHOSTS. Monsters. Policemen?

Some police officials are alarmed that parents have started invoking the images of policemen to scare children from doing bad things.

This is on top of the stereotype of policemen as arrogant, corrupt and of being womanizers.

In Navotas, police chief Genesis Tolejano has thought of something to change this perception: Invite children and serve them soup and native cakes.

Some 200 children and parents trooped to the police station yesterday morning for a feeding program organized by local lawmen.

Tolejano told the INQUIRER the feeding program served as an "opportunity (for policemen) to get along with children and erase the wrong impression (they have of policemen)."

Rebuilding image

He also called on the parents to stop depicting policemen as bad guys to their children.

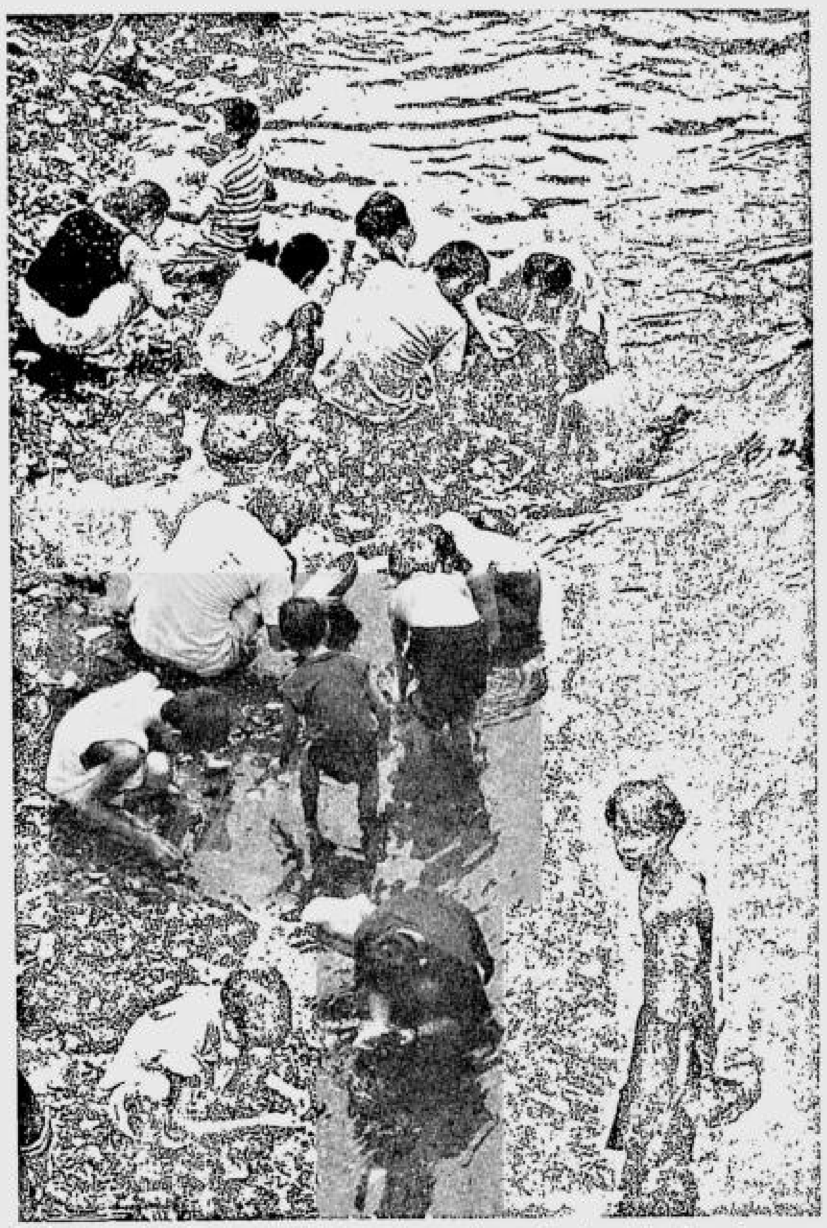
But aside from rebuilding their image, Tolejano said the feeding program was also aimed at giving temporary relief to some poor residents of Navotas.

The other day, the Social Weather Stations reported the worsening problem of hunger in the country: One out of every seven households had nothing to eat at least once in the last three months.

The budget for the feeding program yesterday was just P3,000.

Tolejano said he got funding from a friend in the US state of Texas who came to know him through an INQUIRER article published last May 31.

The article reported the distribution of Bibles and regular Bible studies in the Northern Police District.



HOPING that mud will yield gold, people continue to flock and dig along the banks of a polluted river in Barangay Damayan, Quezon City. They ignore warnings of health officials that they could instead get a harvest of diseases from the waterway.
JOAN BONDOC

QC 'GOLD RUSH'

Diggers ignore health warning

By Volt Contreras

THEY'RE not budging an inch.

Despite appeals from environment and health officials to abandon their search for gold nuggets in a murky river in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City, fortune seekers from shantytowns around Metro Manila continue to flock to the site.

Edwin Rillon, a geologist of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), earlier said the search would be futile as no gold deposits could possibly be found there.

The panning and scrounging continued even after Environment Secretary Michael Defensor dropped by at around 2 p.m. to again warn the people of the deadly diseases they could get from the polluted Dario River.

Defensor made himself loud and clear using a megaphone, but his message practically had no effect on the crowd which included children, women and old couples.

The scavengers merely paused briefly, then resumed their search for what the MGB earlier certified as "processed gold slugs" accidentally dumped into the water a few days ago when the river overflowed.

The Bureau's insistence that the adobe-layered banks and riverbed could not possibly be a natural host of gold, also meant nothing to the searchers as they scooped and strained anything with a yellowish glow recovered from the muddy waters.

Defensor said the Quezon City government and the Department of Health may be asked to finally cordon off the affected portion of the waterway if people continue to ignore the risks. Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte also said he had discouraged the residents from the search, saying the gold story was just a hoax.

Defensor noted, though, that the crowd had gradually thinned in the past few days as gold "finds" were rare.

But money continued to be made at the site even as Defensor spoke.

Danny Calimliman, one of the many gold "buyers" who had found a market in the area for the past four days, said business was still good, as he showed off gold-encrusted metal scraps sold to him hours earlier.

He said he had paid as much as P1,200 to as low as P20 for a tiny piece, depending on its "purity."

A buyer of gold for the last 10 years, Danny said he can tell if a metal was made of real gold on the spot, using tools he carried with him in a leather bag.

According to a story gathered by the MGB, the gold came from five drums of discarded metals from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, which a waste disposal contractor earlier left by the riverbank.

The drums' contents had spilled into the river when the tides rose due to heavy rains in late August.

A resident reported the first sighting of the gold last week, and the news has since drawn hundreds to the area.

With Tina G. Santos

2 versions, same story of suspect's slay

By Nancy C. Carvajal

LAS PIÑAS police yesterday issued conflicting versions on the death of Rafael Roldan, a suspect in several killing incidents that had terrified residents in the city.

Officer on case SPO4 Arnold Alabastro told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview that Roldan tried to escape when the police car they rode in broke down on their way to Las Piñas Medical Center.

Hospital or precinct?

Roldan had to be brought to the hospital for a routine examination usually administered to arrested suspects before they could be ready for an inquest, Alabastro said.

But a police report said the group was on its way to police community precinct number 2 when the suspect tried to escape. It added that SPO2 Alfredo de la Cruz, who had arrested Roldan, ordered the suspect to stop. Instead of obeying him, the suspect took out a fan knife and stabbed de la Cruz, the report said.

Instant death

De la Cruz was able to parry the attacks, and later shot the suspect, hitting him in different parts of the body, the same report said.

Roldan died instantly.

The slain suspect was with David Orsal, reportedly a coworker of Roldan at a bakery, it added. It was not clear in the report if Orsal was also a suspect in the killings.

Vigilance, Patrol 117 lead to arrest of rape suspect

By Nelson F. Flores

A CALL to Patrol 117 by alert village watchmen led police to a 24-year-old suspect in the rape of a 14-year-old high school student in Quezon City.

The suspect, Brenan Aquino, was about to flee when arrested by members of the Central Police District Station 6. He was positively identified by the victim as the person who raped her on Sept. 20 along Halaman Street, Barangay Commonwealth.

In his report to Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, Station 6 Chief Supt. Arturo Navarette said they received information about the incident from a Patrol 117 Hotline operator, prompting him to dispatch lawmen to arrest the suspect.

Police records showed that the suspect, a fish vendor, invited the victim, who just arrived from the province, to attend a birthday party in his home. The records further showed that the girl apparently was given a drug-laced soft drink which made her fall asleep.

The victim later told policemen that when she woke up, her body was aching and that Aquino was asleep beside her. She added that when Aquino woke up, he raped her while threatening to kill her if she told anyone of her ordeal.

Phone call to 117

It was only after three days that the victim told her mother about the incident. The mother then told barangay officials. It was the village official who called up Patrol 117, Navarette said.

The suspect is now detained while facing rape charges before the local city prosecutors' office.

Meanwhile, another call to Patrol 117, this time by a concerned citizen, prevented five suspected kidnappers from abducting a lady teacher in Butuan City last month.

Reyes said the call to Patrol 117 made it possible for the members of the police Regional Mobile Group to apprehend the suspects and prevent the abduction of Catalina Culaste, 44, a teacher from Barangay Sacol, Agusan Del Norte.

He said Culaste was abducted along P. Burgos Street on Sept. 14. The incident was witnessed by a female pedestrian who called Patrol 117.

Reyes identified the suspects as Army Pfc. Emilio Cena, Elvie Plana, Alexander Lofranco, Jhon Torralba and Julieto Andil, an alleged former New People's Army guerilla. The suspects did not resist arrest.

Police seized from the suspects three cal. 45 pistols with several magazines and live ammunition, a hand grenade, a stainless kitchen knife, a black bonnet and a KIA Besta van with plate number WKF 746.

8 Antipolo City inmates succumb to tuberculosis

By Ruth L. Navarra

TUBERCULOSIS in detention proved to be a death sentence.

In a span of 45 days, eight inmates died from tuberculosis at the Antipolo City Jail.

Winifrido Gomez, 39; Ronald Garcia, 29; Alvin Catada, 30; Rex Vidal, 30; Joel Samaniego, 27; Felipe Liad, 31; Arnel Ronilla, 19; and Danilo Vetenor, 31, died from Sept. 1 to Oct. 15.

The deaths raised to 16 the number of inmates who died while detained at the city jail since January this year, according to warden Supt. Ignacio Panti.

Panti added that they had proposals of transferring at least 20 other inmates, suspected of having been afflicted by TB, to the Teresa Municipal Jail, also in Antipolo.

Although the Teresa jail is smaller than the one in Antipolo, it has a rooftop that can be converted to a dispensary. The fresh air on the rooftop could do good to the inmates, Panti said.

Some 600 prisoners are crammed inside the Antipolo City Jail that was designed to hold from 100 to 150 people only.

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TENNIS: ATP Thailand Open; 1:30 p.m.; Star Sports—Check out the replay of the semifinals from Bangkok.

2004 Davis Cup Semifinals; 10 p.m.; Sports Plus—Relive the semifinals of this inter-nation team tournament.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Coke, Shell kick off RP Cup bids

Momentum on Barangay Ginebra's side as Kings battle Purefoods TJ Hotdogs

COCA-COLA has thrived on its running game for years but when the Tigers play the Shell Turbochargers in the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum tonight, expect both teams to outrun each other.

"We will try to match up with Coke's fast-paced offense. We don't have a dominant frontline, so we might as well use what we have," said Shell coach Leo Austria, whose charges are now banking more on speed rather than height.

The Tigers and the Turbochargers collide in the first game of a double-header at 4:30 p.m.

Barangay Ginebra meets Purefoods in the second match with the Gin Kings out to keep their momentum in the last conference where they beat Red Bull Barako for the Fiesta Cup crown.

Off-season buildup

Three acquisitions during the off-season have strengthened Shell's roster with the peppery Celino Cruz adding speed in the backcourt and Marlon Legaspi and rookie Irvin Sotto augmenting the 'Turbochargers' formation in the middle.

"When it comes to conditioning, the team is in tip-top shape. But I don't know if it's enough against Coke because talent-wise, we're the underdogs," said Austria, a stickler for fluid motion offense during his PBL coaching days.

Ominously, though, it's the same strategy the Tigers—who hardly rely on individual and low-post plays—have employed against their rivals.

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:30 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Shell
7:20 p.m.—Ginebra vs Purefoods

Keeping up with speedsters

Even Tigers big men Rafi Reavis, Rudy Hatfield, Edward Juinio and Rob Wainwright can keep up with speedsters Jeffrey Cariaso, Ato Morano, Gary David, Will Antonio and Johnny Abarrientos.

"Although we can contain (the Tigers) in the paint, we don't have the manpower to stop them one-on-one," said Austria. "We'll concentrate more on defense and forget about single coverage."

Legaspi (6-5) and Sotto (6-7) have infused new blood into the 'Turbochargers' frontline, an area where they were most vulnerable in the past.

While Sotto is recuperating from a miniscus tear on his left knee, Legaspi will help man the slot with Billy Mamaril, Chris Jackson and Adonis Sta. Maria.

Swingman Chris Calaguio is also recovering from a left knee surgery, leaving Ronald Tubid, Tony Dela Cruz, Rich Alvarez, Kalani Ferreria, Rensy Bajar and Jun Marzan to set up the Shell backcourt.

June Navarro

WILLIE Miller of Talk 'N Text eludes San Miguel Beer's Joey Mente during their game Sunday. TNT won, 93-89. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Addict Mobile makes Espinas No. 1 PBL pick

ADDICT Mobile-Ateneo, formerly Lee Pipes, expectedly made flamboyant NCAA star Gabby Espinas the No. 1 pick in yesterday's PBL Rookie Draft for the season-ending Open Championship at the Makati Coliseum.

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Title	Artist	Mono Keyword	Poly Keyword
How Do I Live	LeAnn Rimes	TONE HOWDOILIVE	POLY HOWDOILIVE
You're In Love	Wilson Phillips	TONE URINLUV	POLY URINLUV
Burn	Tina Arena	TONE BURN1	POLY BURN1
Hands To Heaven	Christian Bautista	TONE HANDS2HVN	POLY HANDS2HVN
Can't Lose You	F4	TONE CANTLOSE	POLY CANTLOSE
I'll Be	Edwin McCain	TONE IBE	POLY IBE
Unwell	Matchbox Twenty	TONE UNWELL	POLY UNWELL
If I Ain't Got You	Alicia Keys	TONE AINTGOTU	POLY AINTGOTU
Everytime	Britney Spears	TONE EVERYTIME	POLY EVERYTIME
I'll Never Get Over You (Getting Over Me)	Bellefire	TONE NVRGETOVR	POLY NVRGETOVR
Ba't Di Mo Pagbigyan	King	TONE BATDIMO	POLY BATDIMO
Kanlungan	Noel Cabangon	TONE KANLUNGAN	POLY KANLUNGAN
Broken Vow	Lara Fabian	TONE BROKEN	POLY BROKEN
Until I Get Over You	Christina Milian	TONE GETOVER	POLY GETOVER
Kahit Sandali	Jennylyn Mercado	TONE KAHITSANDALI	POLY KAHITSANDALI

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Note: In order for you to identify which musical work the ringtone in question is based on, we have, in addition to the song title, referred an artist who has made the song well known. The artist in question has not participated in the production of the ringtone.

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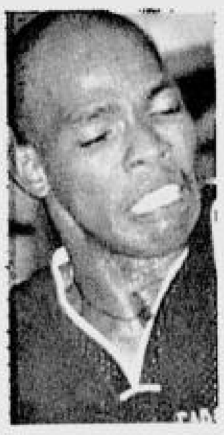

ESPINAS

Addict Mobile makes Espinas No. 1 PBL pick

From page A23

Espinas, the 6-foot-5 Olongapo City banger who helped Philippine Christian University win its first NCAA crown this year, is expected to fill up the vacuum left by former top gunner Larry Fonacier.

The streak-shooting Fonacier suffered a serious foot ligament injury in the early part of the UAAP tournament, and Espinas, according to coach Sandy Arespacochaga, will definitely play a big role for the team.

"We need him for his rebounding, inside scoring and athleticism," said the youthful coach. "*Hindi lang kami ang matutulungan niya, pati siya matutulungan din namin* (His presence will benefit the team, and vice versa). He's a big catch."

Commissioner Chino Trinidad agreed.

"Espinas will be a big help for the team with his athleticism and rebounding," he said.

Nap Gutierrez, Espinas' adviser, said his ward is set to talk with PCU team manager Bong Sales and coach Ato Tolentino tomorrow to allow him to play for the Eagles for a year.

Addict Mobile has until Friday next week to sign up the NCAA Rookie and MVP winner, and Arespacochaga is confident they can get the services of Espinas, who will be joined at the frontline by UAAP Mythical Five member Paolo Bugia.

The team also picked Espinas' PCU teammate Jason Castro in the second round and five players from the dispersal draft, namely, Christian Luanzon, Jenkins Mesina, Jam Alfad, Rey Mendoza and Derick Hubalde.

Montaña Pawnshop picked Adamson's Karl Kenneth Bono as the No. 2 pick. The Jewelers also grabbed Cebuano hotshot Reed Juntilla from the dispersal pool.

Toyota Otis-Letran, choosing third, elevated 6-foot-7 Mark Andaya to its roster along with Hafer Mondragon.

Completing the first round picks are UPHDS's Noy Javier (4th, Welcoat), Jeff Chan (5th, Viva Mineral Water-FEU), Jerwin Gaco (6th, ICTSI-La Salle), Joseph Ronald Quinahan (7th, GMC), and Vladymir Joe (8th, Air Philippines).

Also drafted in the second round were Ian Garrido (Moñtana), Fritz Bauzon (Welcoat), Jonathan Babilonia (Viva-FEU), Jayvee Casio (ICTSI-La Salle), Rex Mangubat (GMC) and Yousif Aljamal (Air Phil.).

Aside from Gaco and Casio, ICTSI also elevated Ryan Arana, Mark Benitez, Michael Belga, Oliver Cua, Tim Gatchalian and Arthur Walsham.

Quirimit untouchable in time trials

QUICKEST: Arnel Quirimit (left) with runner-up Enrique Domingo (center) and Lito Atilano

ARNEL QUIRIMIT was unstoppable in the Elite category and so was Irish Valenzuela in the junior race as both topped the individual time trials of the National Cycling Open in Tagaytay City yesterday.

Already winners of the massed start the other day on an out-and-back course also in Tagaytay, Quirimit, the 2003 Tour Pilipinas champion and national team mainstay, clocked one hour, five minutes and 34.77 seconds for the gold medal in the 39.7-km ITT for elite.

The 18-year-old Valenzuela, a member of the PhilCycling's developmental pool, was as furious in the juniors' 29-km ITT and earned his second gold medal after Monday's massed start with a time of 51:59.71.

Enrique Domingo, another RP team mainstay and king of the Tour Pilipinas sprints, clinched the Elite silver medal—the same mint he got in massed start—in 1:07:08.43, while Lito Atilano settled for the bronze in 1:08:13.29.

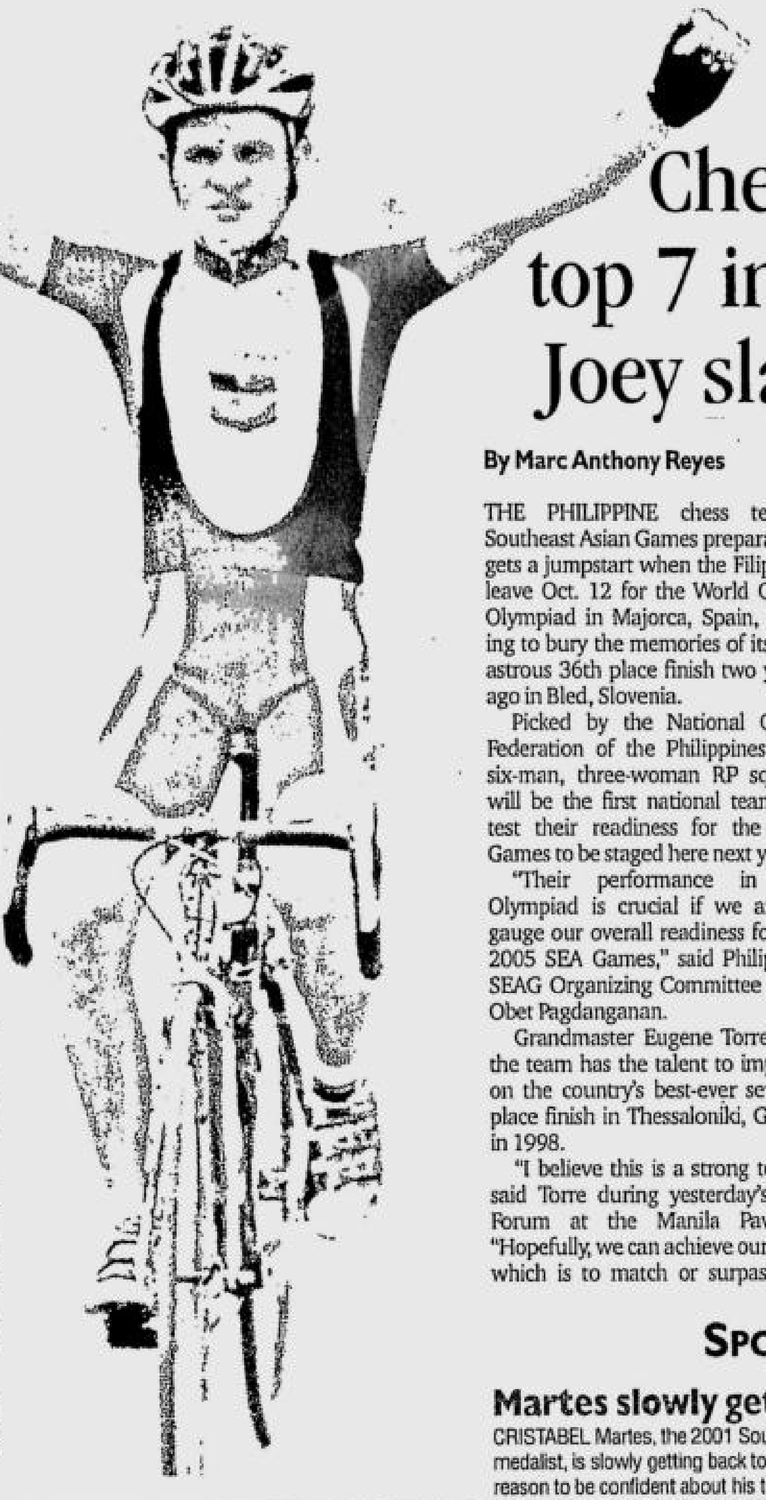
March Alconar bagged the juniors silver medal in 52:05.10 and Leonel Dimaano the bronze medal in 53:43.51.

The road and velodrome races of the National Open's revival held in conjunction with PhilCycling's cycling festival formed a third of the nationals which are being staged this week as prelude to the 10th Asian Mountain Bike Championships in Puerto Princesa City.

The Asian championships have lured nearly a hundred riders from 11 countries who will vie in cross-country and downhill races for men, women and juniors.

Besides Puerto Princesa City under Mayor Edward Hagedorn and Air21 of PhilCycling president Bert Lina, the Asian MTB and the entire cycling festival are also supported by Tour Pilipinas Inc., the Philippine Sports Commission, the Philippine Olympic Committee, Kontrol, Philippine Airlines, Cargohaus, Dos-1, e-konek, Mail and More and Agua de Laguna.

Already in town are teams from Japan, Chinese Taipei, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Iran, Indonesia and Brunei. Thailand is coming in today.


PAOLO MANAPUL (left) raises his hands in triumph after ruling the 1-km velodrome race Monday at the Amoranto Stadium in Quezon City.

Chessers target top 7 in Olympiad; Joey slams Estimo

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE chess team's Southeast Asian Games preparation gets a jumpstart when the Filipinos leave Oct. 12 for the World Chess Olympiad in Majorca, Spain, hoping to bury the memories of its disastrous 36th place finish two years ago in Bled, Slovenia.

Picked by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, the six-man, three-woman RP squads will be the first national teams to test their readiness for the SEA Games to be staged here next year.

"Their performance in the Olympiad is crucial if we are to gauge our overall readiness for the 2005 SEA Games," said Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee chair Obet Pagdanganan.

Grandmaster Eugene Torre said the team has the talent to improve on the country's best-ever seventh place finish in Thessaloniki, Greece in 1998.

"I believe this is a strong team," said Torre during yesterday's PSA Forum at the Manila Pavilion. "Hopefully, we can achieve our goal, which is to match or surpass our best finish ever."

Joining Torre at the forum were GM Joey Antonio, International Master Jayson Gonzales, national champion Darwin Laylo, Emmanuel Senador, Joy Lomibao, Beverly Mendoza and Aices Salvador.

Mark Paragua, soon to be the country's youngest GM at 20, is also part of the team. He won two of three tournaments in Ukraine recently to breach the 2600 Elo rating—a grade no other Filipino has ever achieved.

Antonio, however, disagreed with the decision to appoint secretary general Sammy Estimo as non-playing team captain.

Antonio accused Estimo of abandoning the RP squad in Bled and of withholding the allowances of team members, two charges the NCFP official flatly denied.

"I did everything for the team in Bled," Estimo said. "You can ask Torre, Paragua and the other members of the team about it."

NCFP president Go Teng Kok said the teams' strong finish in Majorca will hopefully inspire other RP teams to get ready to win the overall championship in the SEA Games."

SPORTSWATCH

Martes slowly getting old form back

CRISTABEL Martes, the 2001 Southeast Asian Games women's marathon gold medalist, is slowly getting back to form, giving athletics chief Go Teng Kok more reason to be confident about his team's performance in next year's biennial competitions. After missing the 2003 Vietnam SEAG because of a thigh injury she incurred in 2002, Martes, who hails from Benguet, has pledged reclaim her title when the Games the country hosts the Games next year. Her personal best of 2:45:48 is still the best in the region. "I have confidence in her (Martes) because she herself is confident to get back in shape. I'm ready to count her preparations as another gold medal in the basket," Go said. Martes rose to fame in 1999 when she won the Central Luzon regional race of the National Milo Marathon in 3:06:36.

110 fights slated today at Roligon

TWENTY new entries fielding five roosters each and 40 finalists figure in 110 all-important fights as the championship of the Thunderbird-backed Stag Festival 5-Stag Derby gets under way today at the Roligon Mega Cockpit. First duel is set at 3 p.m. Hosted by Rolly Ligon, in cooperation with Thunderbird Baby Stag Booster and Thunderbird Stag Developer, the annual event stakes a P1 million guaranteed prize. There will also be a big cash prize for the winner of the fastest kill award. The Masbate team of World Slasher champ Rey Briones leads the championship hopefuls with two entries: CLG Enforcer (with Col. Gara) and Showtime Masbate (with Bubot Booc). Meanwhile, Abraham Bernales, Mody "Porma" Almendras and Tiling Capitan will continue their Cash Premyo series with a 3-stag derby on Oct. 16.

Luzon breeders clash Oct. 12

LUZON'S toughest breeders will resume their stag wars on Oct. 12 and 14 when the second leg of the Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association Inc. (LGBA) 7-Stag Derby unfolds at the Araneta Coliseum. A bonus of P100,000 will be added to the cash prize at stake. Entry fee is only P7,000 with a minimum bet of P5,500. Participants must submit entries on Monday, Oct. 11, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Araneta green gate and may call the LGBA office at 926-7808, 924-5072, and 924-5051 (loc. 128) or 09205851940. Jong Morales ruled the first LGBA derby last week after his bet posted 6.5 points. The final leg will be held at the Roligon Mega Cockpit on Oct. 25 and 27. The derby is sponsored by Asvet Inc., Thunderbird, Robichem Laboratories, Excellence Gamefowl Specialists, Lakpue Drug Inc. and Vitarich Corp.

BONDAD

Golf body accepts Bondad apology

By Musong R. Castillo

ALI'S well that ends well.

The National Golf Association of the Philippines yesterday welcomed Frances Bondad's change of heart and now expects her to qualify for the Southeast Asian Games team.

The 16-year-old Australia-based ace issued a public apology on Tuesday, and the NGAP was more than willing to take her back in, practically reserving a slot for her in the qualifying series slated next year once she has formally regained her Filipino citizenship.

"We welcome her change of heart," said retired Navy vice-admiral Luisito Fernandez, the NGAP secretary general. "We expect her to participate in the qualifying series as a Filipino."

In her apology, Bondad said she would "love to represent the Philippines in the SEA Games, wear the Philippine colors and win gold."

Meanwhile, in making sure that the country is best represented in the SEA Games, the NGAP has forwarded a "minimum cost, maximum gold" budget for training to the First Gentleman Sports Foundation.

Fernandez also thanked the FG Foundation which has pledged to fund the 14-month training of both the men's and ladies' teams for the SEAG.

A total of 20 players have been placed in this program.

Tanguilig powers Pinoy riders' hot chase

RP-PACGOR'S Rhyan Tanguilig stuck to the lead pack like a leech to take third place Monday in Stage 7 of the Dji Sam Soe Tour of Indonesia, keeping the Filipino riders within sight of their best team finish yet in a major overseas cycling event.

The pride of Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya covered the 189.2-kilometer drive from Surabaya to Jember in four hours, 39 minutes and 30 seconds, just two bike-lengths behind Australian stage winner Edmund Hollands and Indonesian runner-up Abdullah Fatahillah, who checked in with similar times of 4:39.26.

Coupled with the 17th place finish of Lloyd Reynante and the 20th place of Bernard Luzon, who both logged 4:40.03 by coming in with the 45-man second bunch, the RP-Pagcor Casino Filipino Trade squad wound up second in the lap to remain entrenched in fourth overall.

With an overall time of 92:13.13, the Filipinos trailed Hong Kong by 1:10 minutes.

Overcoming that deficit will be the main target in Tuesday's penultimate eighth stage from Jember to Banguwangi, where the Filipino riders are expected to rely heavily on their climbing skills.

Miracle men and desperation shots

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

THESE are desperate times crying for urgent solutions, both in sports and national life.

The stats—5 percent of Pinoy households missing their meals—is fearsome enough.

But one look and you sense that there are many more hungry people around, a whole lot more numerous than what statisticians claim.

You could read deep despair in the faces of our gaunt countrymen.

Well, the President herself doesn't seem armed with a readily workable solution, while prices of both food and fuel soar.

Maybe she could ask hungry people to sleep early, to cut down their misery?

Anyway, invention, so says one Vietnamese sage, is the child of necessity.

In order to win a gold medal in the Olympics, drastic changes must be made in our sports set-up, otherwise we would continue to dream an impossible dream.

***

That's from reader Isabelo Laurel-Filomeno of San Lucas, Kapisnon, Kauswagan, Cagayan de Oro City.

"In boxing, officials should work extra hard to allow professionals in the Olympics," he wrote. "If pros in baseball, basketball and other events are allowed, why not in boxing? It's our best hope to win."

He brought up the case of Cuba:

"How come Cubans continue to dominate boxing in the Olympics? It's because pro boxing is banned in their country. Their amateur boxers make it a lifetime career. A Cuban boxer therefore knows the amateur rules by the book; he knows through years of training when to change tactics. It's one asset our boxers do not have. That's the big difference."

***

Thank you, Sir. For your information, the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines has decided to re-acquire Cuban coaching for its next international stint.

Call that a desperate try but, at least, unlike the national government, the ABAP appears ready with a solution to its grave problem.

This could also be the case with First Gentleman Mike Arroyo who had pushed for a politician, Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, as the next president of the Philippine Olympic Committee.

We had noted that Mr. Arroyo's position could be both hysterical and absurd.

But there are other sectors, mainly among traditional boot-lickers, that continue to insist Cojuangco, a grizzled politician, could be the miracle man who can save RP sports from ultimate doom.

***

At best, the First Gentleman's endorsement of Cojuangco was a desperation shot.

Of course, you're also aware that the impossible happens, lost games are suddenly won on miracle tries.

In fact, Cojuangco was quick to assure that he, indeed, could be what RP sports had needed all these fruitless years.

Remember how he recently presented a win-win sports menu during an exclusive interview with the INQUIRER's Marc Anthony Reyes?

His avowed program has clearly helped prop up Cojuangco's bid for the POC presidency, as he continues to lead incumbent Celso Dayrit in unofficial surveys.

Cojuangco, the way he has positioned himself for the top POC post, did not seem like he would need miracles in pushing for fruitful reforms in RP sports.

Remember how Cojuangco readily offered what had smelled like a sweet winning centerpiece dish days after he had agreed to run for the POC presidency?

***

Yes, he ticked off a monumental developmental program, anchored on the establishment of a national sports training center in Clark Field, Pampanga.

Of course, similarly notable was his offered plan to sell the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and spend the proceeds for the national training center.

The Cojuangco plan, at last count, definitely could not take off the ground.

Why? Because, much as he would like it, he could not sell the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, which originally belonged to the City of Manila and was, at last count, in the process of being reclaimed by Mayor Lito Atienza and his Council.

Listen. The big problem here is that Cojuangco has not offered an alternate solution, a new source of funds, after his plan to sell the RMSC was shot down.

Yes, there's the danger of Cojuangco winning the POC presidential battle on duds.

His desperation shot was an air ball, *kapus*.

But then, what's he a Mike Arroyo miracle man for?

Pippen, Jordan's sidekick, retires

DEERFIELD, Illinois—Scottie Pippen, who teamed with Michael Jordan to form a tandem that drove the Chicago Bulls to six NBA titles in the 1990s, is expected to retire after 17 seasons, an NBA source said.

The source, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Pippen is scheduled to make the announcement Tuesday on the Bulls' first day of training camp practice. The team held its media day Monday and Pippen was not present.

His agent, Jimmy Sexton, did not immediately return a call for comment Monday.

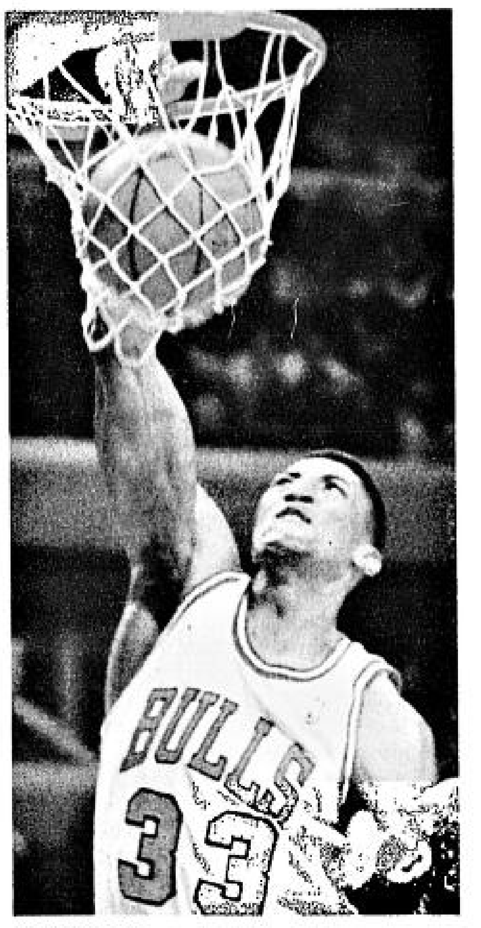
Pippen was brought back last season to give leadership and experience to a young Bulls team, but he had knee surgery in December and played in only 23 games as the Bulls went 23-59. It was the first time in his career the seven-time All-Star missed the playoffs.

Pippen, 39, was voted one of the NBA's 50 greatest players. He is known for his all-around play, especially his long-armed defense against some of the league's best scorers.

He was traded to Houston in 1999 after the lockout, played one season with the Rockets and then spent four years in Portland. He signed a two-year, $10-million deal to return to Chicago in the offseason and averaged 5.9 points.

"I would have liked an opportunity to coach him because I liked having Scottie around last year," Bulls coach Scott Skiles said Monday.

"The few days he did practice and play in games he kind of took it to another level and set a good example. Only a certain player can decide when it's time to hang it up. A lay down Hall of Famer. Of course you'd like to have him around, but he's not able to go." *AP*



PIPPEN: Off to sunset AP

Lakers now Kobe's team

Payton, Carter finally show up; Iverson vows to behave

EL SEGUNDO, California—Kobe Bryant is a free man—and the Los Angeles Lakers are his team. Shaquille O'Neal, Derek Fisher, Gary Payton and Karl Malone are gone, leaving Bryant as Showtime's lone superstar.

"This is my team to lead," Bryant said Monday, a day before the Lakers open training camp in San Diego. "Shaq was the focal point of the team. Now it's different. Guys are looking to me for leadership, so it's important that I establish what type of team we're going to be."

Bryant got a jump on that by phoning each of his teammates, a group including nine new players, during the summer. Most of the team has been working out together informally for the last few weeks.

Attention drawers

Bryant wasn't the only player drawing attention around the NBA.

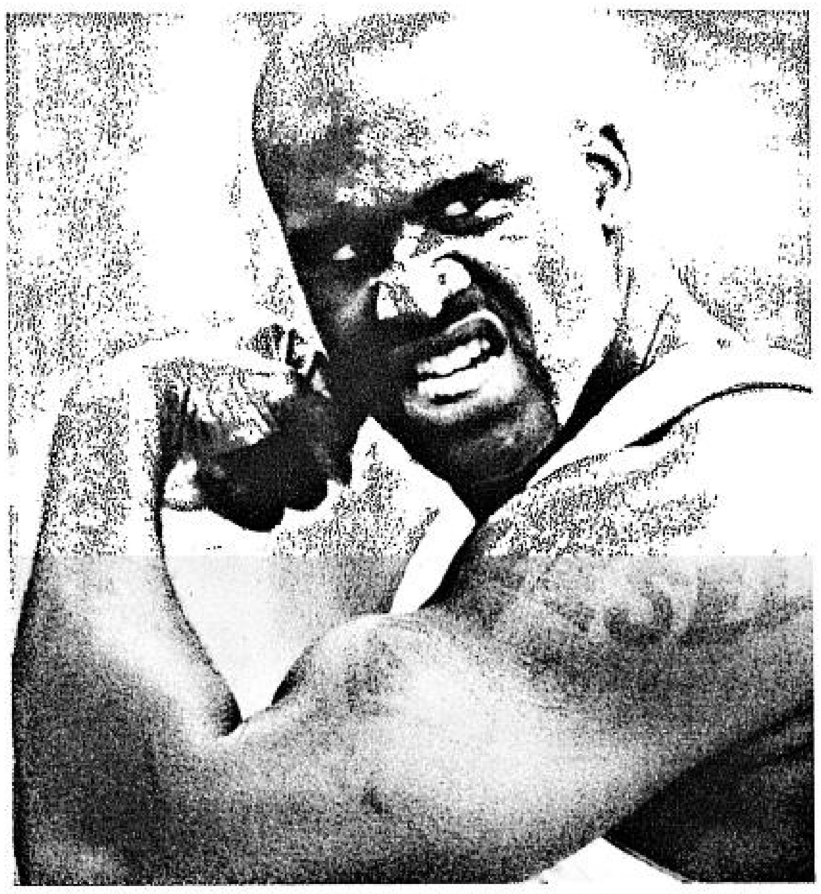
Vince Carter arrived in Toronto, and Payton showed up with his new team—the Boston Celtics—ending questions whether they would report to their clubs on time.

Payton was acquired in an offseason trade with the Lakers and wasn't happy about it.

The 36-year-old guard didn't want to play in Boston or move his family from the West Coast. He missed an Aug. 13 deadline for his physical, but he didn't let that keep him from reporting for the opening of camp in Vermont.

Carter asked during the summer to be traded but the Raptors are hoping the All-Star guard changes his mind.

"I have a job to do. I'm coming here to play and win for whatever it says on my jersey," said Carter, who will earn $12 million this season. "It says Toronto Raptors, well then I'm going to perform for the Toronto Raptors."



SURROUNDED by new players like Lamar Odom (right, bottom photo), Kobe Bryant is now the main man of the Los Angeles Lakers, and the main target of former teammate Shaquille O'Neal's ire. REUTERS

Better leader

In Philadelphia, Allen Iverson declared Monday that he is 100 percent and promised to be a better leader and teammate.

Calling last year "the worst season of my career, by far," Iverson came to training camp Monday with a positive attitude and said he would have no problems getting along with new Philadelphia 76ers coach Jim O'Brien.

Iverson was more of a distraction than a contributor on last year's team that went 33-49 and missed the playoffs for the first time since the 1997-98 season. He clashed with interim coach Chris Ford and watched some games from a luxury box or the locker room, if he stayed at all, instead of on the bench with his teammates.

Untarnished

Bryant is beginning this season with his focus squarely on basketball and not the felony sexual assault case that shadowed him throughout the past year.

His off-court troubles haven't tarnished him in the eyes of new teammate Lamar Odom, who's known Bryant for eight years.

"Nothing has changed. He's a good person," said Odom, who came from Miami in the O'Neal trade after starting his NBA career with the Clippers.

The charge against Bryant was dismissed last month at his accuser's request, but he still faces a civil lawsuit filed in Denver by the woman.

He didn't discuss the case Monday or the documents that have been released, including an allegation by Bryant that O'Neal paid up to $1 million in hush money to various women to keep quiet about situations like the one Bryant got into.

Verbal sparring

O'Neal dismissed the allegation as "ridiculous" and took a shot at Bryant by saying, "I'm not the one buying love"—an apparent reference to an expensive ring that Bryant bought his wife after he was charged.

Asked if the verbal sparring between the superstars was over, Bryant said, "I'm not verbal sparring at all. I've moved on."

Bryant and O'Neal will meet on the court in a Christmas Day game at Staples Center, their first matchup since O'Neal was traded. The remaining 1,000 tickets for the game sold out in 5 minutes on Monday.

Asked if he was disappointed by O'Neal's remarks during the summer, Bryant said, "I don't think about it, I don't focus on that. When the Lakers face the Heat, then we'll talk about that." *AP*

Pumaren undecided on PBL job

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE NEW Philippine Basketball League season is less than three weeks away, but coach Franz Pumaren remains uncertain if he will lead the ICTSI-La Salle team for one last time.

"Right now, I'm still undecided. I really need a break. I've been working really hard for the past nine months and I had no time to unwind," said Pumaren, who received the Coach of the Year Award from the UAAP Press Corps yesterday at the Manila Pavilion.

Pumaren, who recently steered the Archers to their fifth championship in seven years, shared the citation with his brother, Dindo.

The first-year coach of the University of the East also surpassed expectations when he piloted the rookie-laden squad to the Final Four.

But while Dindo is looking forward to lead the UE Warriors for another year, Franz announced his final season for La Salle ended after the Archers' victory in the deciding Game 3 of the Finals last Thursday.

"I respect his decision. But it's an advantage for me. I now have three consultants (along with his father Pilo and brother Derek)," Dindo said in jest.

Dindo, also a La Salle alumnus, said he's not interested in taking on Franz's position.

"I have a three-year contract with UE and we've already set a basketball program for the team. And what Franz did was difficult. There's great pressure on whoever will replace him," he said.

West Drive hosts start of Platinum Cup elims

THE WEST Drive Badminton Club in Pasig plays host to the first area eliminations of the first National Inter-Club Platinum Cup presented by Globe Platinum and the INQUIRER BADMINTON this weekend (Oct. 9-10) with 14 teams participating.

At stake in the tourney dubbed as the country's first ever Battle of the Courts are the first two slots to the grand finals scheduled Nov. 20-21 at the Market! Market! at Fort Bonifacio.

Competing are Badminton Buddies, Badminton Galaxy, Badminton Gold, Feather Alley Badminton Center, Greenpark Badminton Center, Marikina Badminton Center, Old Market Badminton Center, Player's Best Badminton Camp, Shuttle's Best C5, Shuttle's Best River Banks, Smasher's Badminton Center, Valle Verde, Myan's and West Drive.

The major sponsors for the tourney are Philippine Airlines, Mizuno and L Timestudio. Nestlé is the official drink sponsor and Gerflor Taraflex the official mat sponsor.

With Philippine Airlines providing 20,000 Mabuhay Miles credit to all the members of the winning team, the overall champion will be sent to Bangkok, Thailand, for a holiday. Also to be given away as tournament and raffle prizes are top-of-the-line items from Mizuno and premium watches from L Timestudio, the popular watch store.

Hostilities kick off after the 8:30 a.m. registration and simple opening ceremonies. Teams will be divided into two and play a round-robin format with the top clubs per group advancing to the crossover semis. Winners assure themselves of the two slots but will still play for the area title.

From West Drive, the eliminations proceed to the Olivarez College Sports Complex on Oct. 16-17 for the South area which has 18 teams, then to The Zone and Yonex on Oct. 23-24 for the Central area with 14 teams and the Olympic Badminton Club on Oct. 30-31 for the North area with 18 teams.

For inquiries, call the INQUIRER BADMINTON office at 8978808 locals 259 or 261, look for Ching.

Dandan, Narvaez lift locals' hopes

THIRD seed Kyle Joshua Dandan and fourth seed Miguel Narvaez scored big wins yesterday to carry the Philippines in the boys' singles of the Phinma Group Futures Foundation International Tennis Federation (ITF) Juniors Circuit at the Ynares Socio-Cultural Sports Center.

Dandan, who with Ralph Kevin Barte reached the doubles finals last week, survived Korean qualifier Cho Soong Jae, 7-5, 7-6 (3), to advance to the quarterfinals against Taiwanese Chang Chien-yuan, who beat Australian Andrew Thomas, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

Narvaez prevailed over Japanese Toshiya Suzuki, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, to set up a meeting with Korean qualifier Hong Hwi Jin, who eliminated Taiwanese Chang Chien-yuan, 6-2, 6-2.

Top seed Taiwanese Chang Huai-en outclassed Korean Park Soon Seong, 6-2, 6-2, to advance against Malaysian Razlan Rawi, who beat Ronald Chow of Hong Kong, 6-2, 7-6 (1).

No. 2 Taiwanese Lien Chia-chu clobbered Malaysian Yeo Sinag Hak, 6-1, 6-2, to forge a quarterfinal duel with Korean qualifier Kim Sung Ho.

In girls' singles, top seed Korean Chin Seul Ki blasted Taiwanese Wang Chieh-ju, 6-0, 6-0, and second seed Filipino-German Anja Vanessa Peter demolished local Melissa Orteza, 6-2, 6-0, to lead the quarterfinalists in this event sanctioned by the Asian Tennis Federation.

Cool Els earns shot at No.1 after World Golf triumph

THOMASTOWN, Ireland—Ernie Els is familiar with his position in the world ranking, but not the scenery.

He no longer is looking up at Tiger Woods.

"Yeah, it's nice," the Big Easy said after winning the American Express Championship. "But I'm still No. 2."

Maybe not for long.

Els managed to pick himself up from a heartbreaking season of majors by winning his first World Golf Championship title Sunday to move ahead of Woods in the world ranking, leaving him only 1.66 points behind No. 1 Vijay Singh.

Woods headed for the Caribbean amid reports he was getting married and will play only three more tournaments the rest of the year, one of them in Japan where the world ranking points will not be as great since he no longer is No. 1.

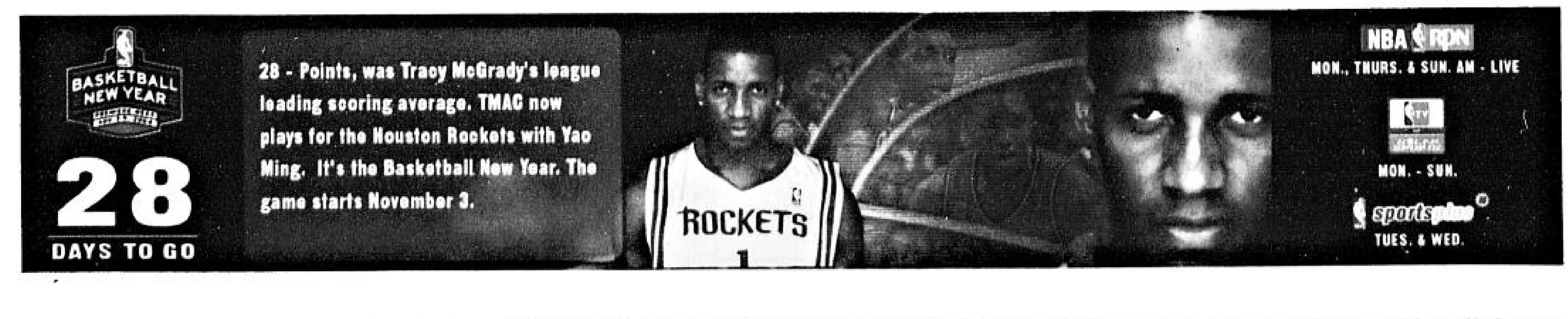
Els and Singh probably will face each other four more times this year.

They are very close friends, having joined the PGA Tour one year apart. But while Els concedes Singh is having the best year in golf, the next step to No. 1 doesn't seem as daunting.

For one, Woods built an enormous lead during his five-year reign, courtesy of winning seven out of 11 majors over four seasons. And that also came with a mystique that no longer exists.

Still, that won't make the climb to No. 1 any easier. *AP*

ERNIE Els is eyeing a bigger title, one currently held by Vijay Singh. AFP



BASKETBALL NEW YEAR
28
DAYS TO GO

28 - Points, was Tracy McGrady's league leading scoring average. TMAC now plays for the Houston Rockets with Yao Ming. It's the Basketball New Year. The game starts November 3.

NBA RPN
MON., THURS. & SUN. AM - LIVE
MON. - SUN.
sportsplus
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Coco Huskers make home debut tonight

LUCENA City—The Quezon Coco Huskers make their home debut against Harbour Centre-Pampanga at 6 p.m. today, hopeful that the friendly confines of the Quezon Convention Center would give them the lift in the First United Regional Basketball League (URBL) conference.

Huskers coach Francis Rodriguez, however, is worried after losing starting forward Mel Latoreno, who was recruited to join the national team.

"Mel is important in my rotation," said Rodriguez. "But I cannot stop him because I know that it is every player's goal to serve the country."

The 6-foot-4 Latoreno averaged 11.0 points in the Huskers' first two losses in the community-based league supported by adidas and Lactovitale.

Rodriguez steered the Philippines to the men's basketball gold medal at the 1991 Manila Southeast Asian Games. He also coached the Philippine team to the 2002 Jones Cup in Taiwan.

Latoreno's legacy in URBL annals is making the league's first two points in the Huskers' 82-77 setback to the Lactovitale-Cebu Province Probiotics on Sept. 25.

Sans Latoreno, Arnold Booker, Jomar Tierra and Buboy Rodriguez will have to score more while 6-foot-6 Jovy Sese, 6-9 Vincent San Diego and 6-5 Gilbert Tenorio have to pound the boards with intensity for the Huskers to reverse their fortune.

For his part, URBL Commissioner Ramon Fernandez was elated that this early the league has achieved its goal of helping players reach the next level of play.

"We have played only six games and now we have a player that was recruited to play for the national team. The URBL is always ready to make its players available," said Fernandez

Harbour Centre, which split its first two games, will be powered by team captain Ariel Garcia, VJ Santos, Pet Duyag and Alex Bognot.

Billy Bansil and Rey Mendoza excelled on the defensive end for coach Alex Gonzales, who'll have his hands full matching wits with Rodriguez.

Today's games mark the first of back-to-back home games for the Huskers. It will be the turn of the Ilocos Sur Snipers to visit Lucena City on Oct. 11.

STANDINGS	W	L
M. Lhuillier-Cebu City	3	0
Harbour Centre	1	1
Ilocos Sur Snipers	1	1
Lactovitale-Cebu Prov.	1	2
Quezon Coco Huskers	0	2

GAME TODAY *(Quezon Convention Center)*
6 p.m.—Quezon Coco Huskers vs Harbour Centre-Pampanga

EQUESTRIAN president Peping Cojuangco makes the ceremonial toss between MotorStar Motorcycle of Fujian-China and the National Athletic Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Naascu) selection ushering the 2nd National Women's Invitational Basketball Championship at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum. Cojuangco is joined by (from left) Peter Ty of Motorstar-Fujian, Picaa president Alvin Tai Lian, Mayor Chen Yi of Fujian-Nanan City, Naascu president Dr. Jay Adalem, lawyer Ernesto Delos Santos, RP women team manager Jimmy Chan Cuan and BAP EVP Christian Tan.

Filipinas post 2nd straight rout in Invitational caging

THE PHILIPPINE women's team notched its second runaway victory yesterday, a 129-20 demolition of the Batangas State University, to grab the lead in the 2nd National Women's Invitational Championship at the Rizal Coliseum.

Quick, strong and skillful, the RP cagebelles were simply awesome against the Philippine Schools, Colleges, Universities Athletic Association (PSCUAA) selection, which struggled throughout due to the players' unfamiliarity with one another's moves.

The result was a nasty 50-2 first quarter explosion by the Nationals, who slowed down a bit in the second quarter but still posted a 70-2 halftime margin in this weeklong tournament backed by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Bestank, Burlington, Baker's Fair, YKL Color, Absolute Distilled Water, Healthy Options, Fuji Films and Motor Star Motor Cycle.

The RP women's team, fresh from a stint in the Southeast Asia Basketball Association (Seaba) Women's Championship in Singapore, routed Colleges and Universities Sports Association champion Philippine Maritime Institute, 114-32, on Sunday.

"The real test will be the visitors from Fujian, China," said national team coach Bai Cristobal. "*Yun ang pinaghahandaan namin talaga.*"

Cristobal was referring to the Motor Star Motor Cycle Team of Fujian, which debuted with a 98-57 blasting of a selection from the National Athletic Association of Sports, Colleges and Universities (Naascu).

The Chinese are looking for a share of the lead with the RP women's team in their game against the PMI cagebelles at presstime.

Leading the assault for the RP cagebelles was power forward Minerva Narciza, who banged away 23 markers, including eight straight in a 26-0 first quarter run that gave the Nationals a 34-2 lead.

Tuason, Angeles try to boost title bid

MIKE Tuason of Tuason Racing-Addict Mobile and Maico Angeles of Primus Racedevils try to fortify their title bids as the 2004 PCSO-Shell Superkarting Series shifts action at Boom Na Boom Kart Track inside the CCP Complex.

Tuason wants another triumph to further strengthen his bid in the Formula Rotax Max Expert division where he currently holds a total of 342 points, well ahead of Tim Gosnel (257 points) and Archie Rubio of Bosch-Intelco (181).

Angeles, on the other hand, hopes to pad his 358 point total in the Rotax Max Novice class against closest pursuer Daniel Cleak of Bosch-Intelco who has 324 points.

Strong showings by Tuason and Angeles will make them virtual champions in this event sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines and sponsored by the Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office through Hon. Rosario Uriarte, Comglasco Aguila Glass, Bridgestone, Aviva Insurance, Eastway Motorcycle Racing and Denso Iridium Power.

Tuason's other challengers are Marcel Thenu (162 points) and Lee Bumgarner of M&M Racing (158), Tom Stockinger, Manny Sy of Primus Racedevils, JP Carino of Bosch-Intelco, Ricardo Loi, Tyson Sy, Oliver Yao and Othmar Stutz.

Women booters bow out of semis

THE PHILIPPINE women's football team bowed to Vietnam, 5-0, Monday and crashed out of the semifinals in the Asean Football Federation (AFF) Women's Championship in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Earlier, Singapore defeated Indonesia, 1-0, to pave the way for the crucial match between the Philippines and the hosts. The Nationals needed a draw or a victory to advance in the tournament, but the Vietnamese superiority came to the fore. The hosts poured four goals in the first 45 minutes and then thwarted the Filipinas' repeated attacks in the second half.

Their second loss in three games put the Filipinas in a triple tie with the Indons and the Singaporeans. The Indons advanced to the semis by virtue of a better quotient.

Ateneo league

THE UNIVERSITY Athletics Office of the Ateneo de Manila University is inviting all alumni, students, and employees of Ateneo schools and all non-Ateneo Jesuit schools to join the 2005 season of the Ateneo Basketball League (ABL).

Interested teams must submit their rosters on or before Oct. 29.

For information, call Chiqui Paterno (0917-5337778) or (Vannie Vallente) 6353257.

ABANGAN!
Job Market's JOBZ: OVERSEAS Employment Expo

Ang Job Fair na ito ay lalahukan ng ilan sa mga tanyag at respetadong overseas recruitment agencies at private companies

Kailan: October 11 & 12, 2004
Saan: Starmall, Las Piñas

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER JOB Market JOB Market starmall

JOBZ OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT EXPO
OCTOBER 11 & 12, 2004 STARMALL, LAS PIÑAS

Activities on October 11, 2004

2:00 PM to 3:00 PM - Nursing Employment opportunities in the US
by Ms. Rachelle Garcia, MD
President of NIR Placement Center, Inc.

3:00 PM to 4:00 PM - Communication on Employment
by Mr. Joseph Reynolds
Managing Consultant of Reynolds Review Institute, Inc.

star group of cinemas movie guide
IN DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND

starmall EDSA - SHAW
Tel. No. 726.61.50
Resident Evil 2
Punisher
Shark tale

METROPOLIS ALABANG star
Tel. No. 850.42.85
Resident Evil 2
Krisanta
Wimbledon
Feng Shui
Punisher
Shark Tale

starmall LAS PINAS
Tel. No. 873.50.04
Dodgeball
Princess Diaries 2

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WIMBLEDON:
The underdog story we just always love to see.

Kirsten Dunst
Paul Bettany in Wimbledon

When screenwriters Jennifer Flackett and Mark Levin came up with the idea of a love story set amidst the world of professional tennis, Erice Fellner, producer and WORKING TILE FILMS co-founder was at once intrigued and snapped up the story. " We loved the idea," says Fellner. "The way in which the characters of Kirsten Dunst and Paul Bettany were set up, the fact that it was an "underdog" type of story and the idea of professional tennis serving as a backdrop for this love story, it had all the ingredients to make a great film. It provided us another oportunity to tell an interesting story in an appealing way."

"Whether you love tennis or hate tennis, it doesn't matter, because this is a story that will entertain audiences," says producer Liza Chasin, herself an avid player. "Not only do people love an underdog story, but they love it when the underdog just might end up with the girl, too."

Wimbledon is about once rising star tennis player Peter Colt (Bettany), who never rose to the top. And just as he was announcing his retirement from tennis, he's about to meet the girl (Dunst) who shows him what it takes to win. Suddenly, the guy everyone counted out, is now the guy everyone is talking about. But can he have the trophy and the girl at the same time?

ADVT

Without . . .

From page A30

magazine offers itself as a portal of relevant information for Filipinos abroad and their families here. It airs locally on cable TV's Prime Channel (99), and ABS-CBN's The Filipino Channel. OPTV starts its fifth season this month.

Feedback

From Vince A. Sarabia of Mandaluyong: "Please come out with reviews of movies and live performances more often. With the money situation so tight, we have to be more judicious about the entertainment we pay for, so we need your good advice..."

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 SHARK TALE (G)
2 WIMBLEDON Subject to MTRCB Rating
3 OPEN WATER (PG-13)
4 PUNISHER (R-13)

PREMIERE THEATRE SHARK TALE (G)

For more information please call 633-2227 / 633-7851 loc. 171

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FROM THE DIRECTOR OF 'RUNAWAY BRIDE' & 'PRETTY WOMAN'

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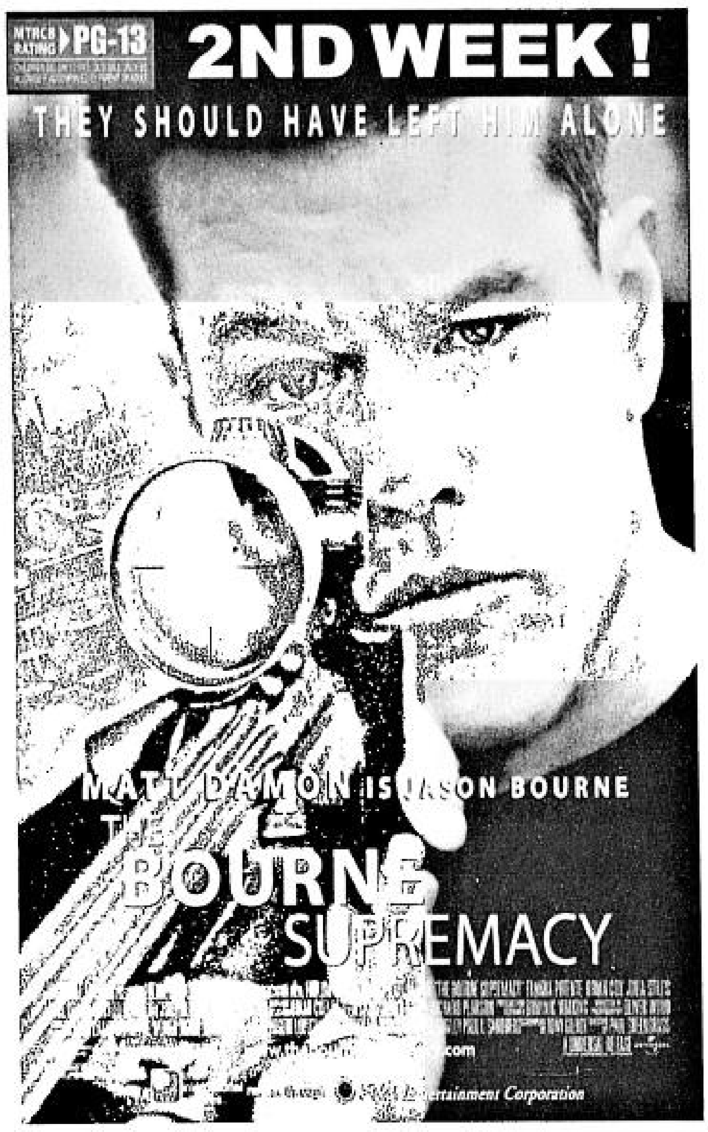
JOHN CORBETT
RAISING HELEN
raising-helen.com
Touchstone Pictures

SOUNDTRACK INCLUDES THE HIT SINGLE "EXTRAORDINARY" FROM LIZ PHAIR
PLUS NEW SONGS FROM [illegible], FIVE FOR FIGHTING, JACK [illegible], FEFE [illegible] AND MANY MORE

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures


MTRCB RATING PG-13
2ND WEEK!
THEY SHOULD HAVE LEFT HIM ALONE
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CINEMA 1	THE PUNISHER	11:35, 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:15 R13
CINEMA 2	SHARK TALE	11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 10:00 GP

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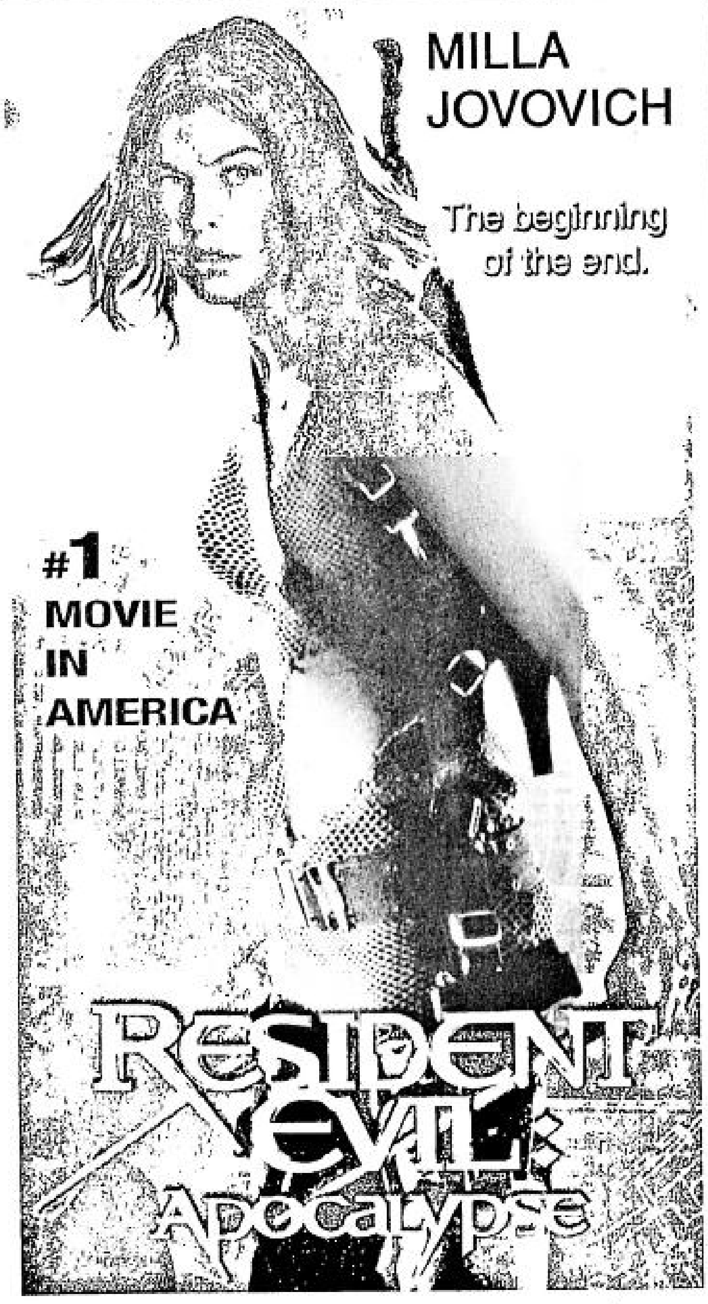
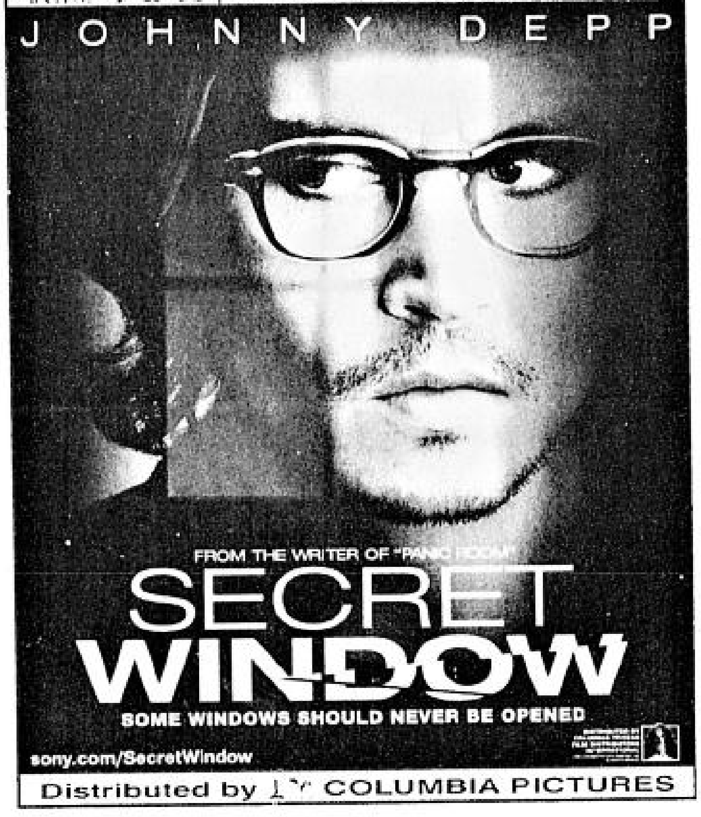
MTRCB ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP

★★★ FLASH ★ FLASH ★ FLASH ★★★
BREAKING BOXOFFICE RECORDS IN MANILA


MILLA JOVOVICH
The beginning of the end.
#1 MOVIE IN AMERICA
RESIDENT EVIL: Apocalypse

"2 Thumbs Up!" - Ebert & Roeper
2ND 'MIND-BLOWING SUSPENSE' WEEK!
MTRCB ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OLD AND UP


JOHNNY DEPP
FROM THE WRITER OF "PANIC ROOM"
SECRET WINDOW
SOME WINDOWS SHOULD NEVER BE OPENED
sony.com/SecretWindow

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Marvel's Unstoppable Vigilante Strikes!
REVENGE BEGINS TODAY!
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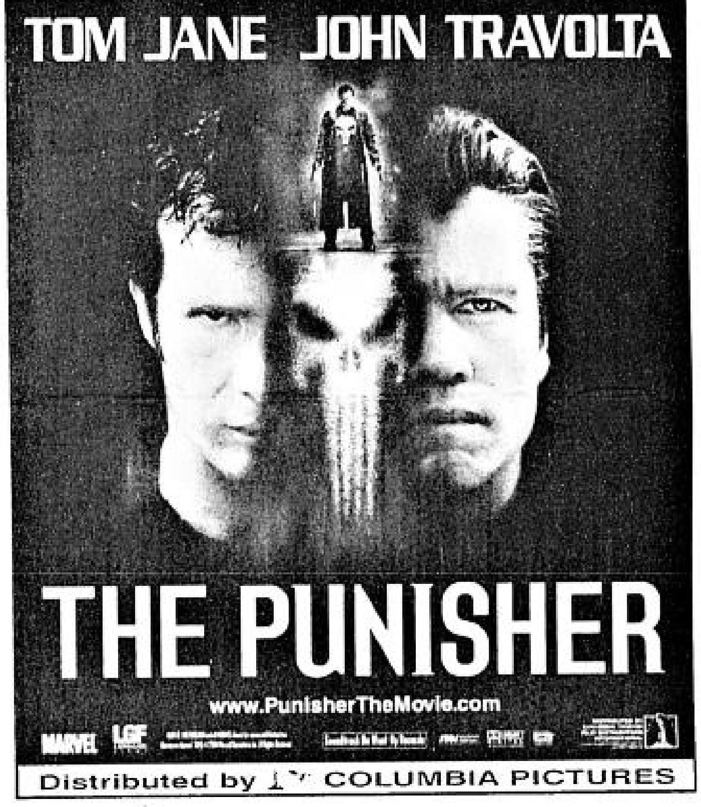
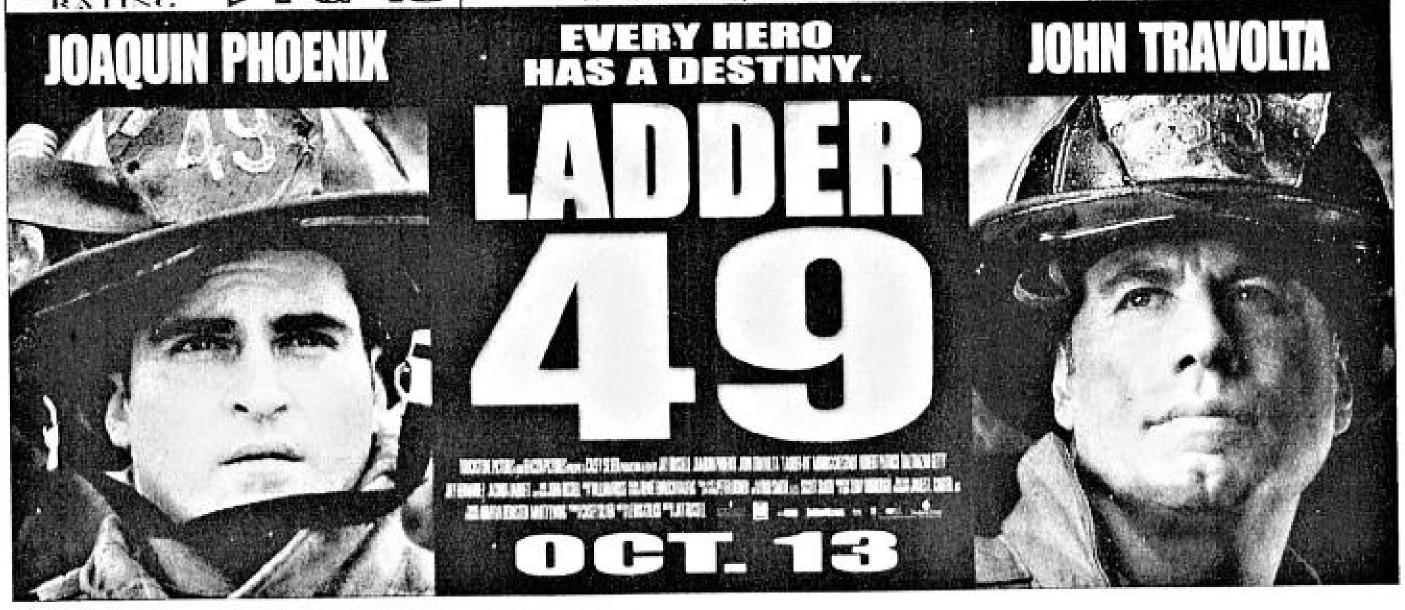
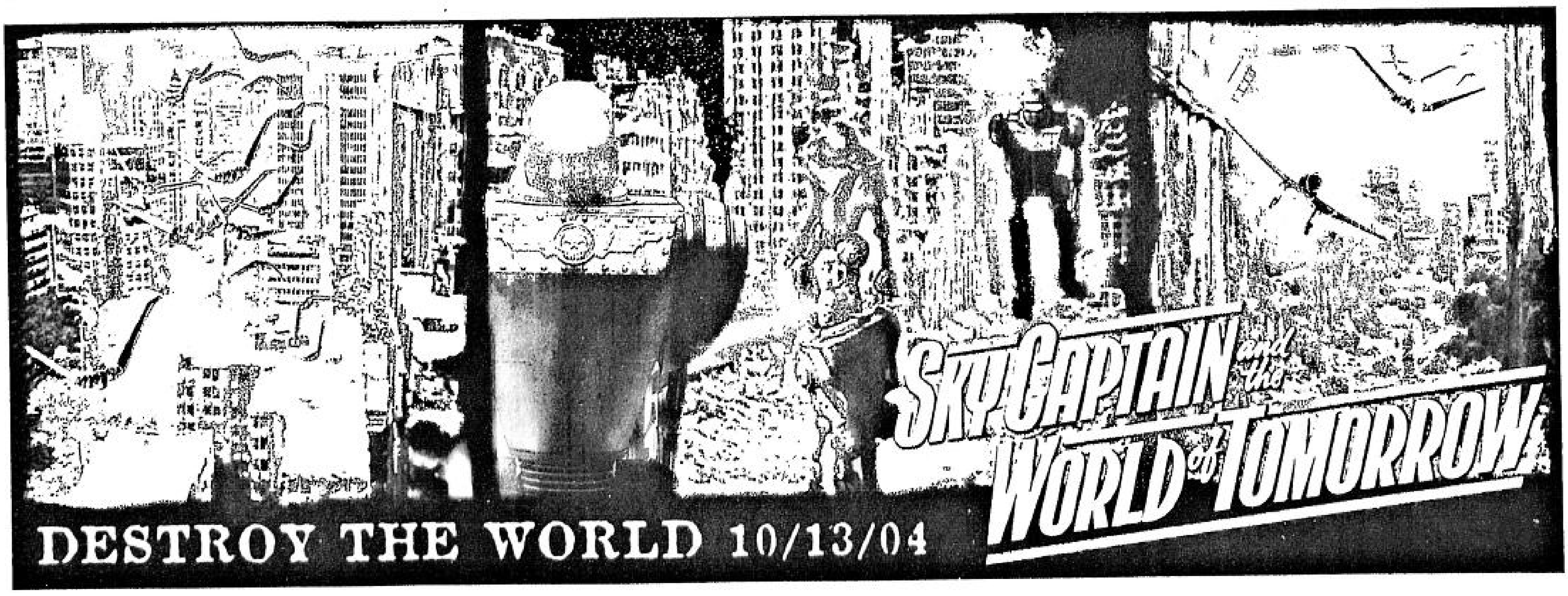

TOM JANE JOHN TRAVOLTA
THE PUNISHER
www.PunisherTheMovie.com
MARVEL

Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.


JOAQUIN PHOENIX
EVERY HERO HAS A DESTINY.
LADDER 49
JOHN TRAVOLTA
OCT. 13


SKY CAPTAIN and the WORLD of TOMORROW
DESTROY THE WORLD 10/13/04

Without further adieu, illegal procession of firearms…

From page A29

the beauties around the world at the beauty pageant are exude with confidence.

(*Ay*, are exude!)

* * *

Host: What happened after the false reports were aired that you died?

Guest: All of our concerned friends, they barged us with phone calls.

(One man's barrage is another man's barge…)

* * *

Host: How do you feel about your new co-host? Do you think you can work well together?

Guest: No problem, I can easily got along with him.

(The question is, can he figure out what you're saying?)

* * *

Host: Your friend has been accused of molesting some male models before a pictorial. How can you defend him?

Guest: You just have to understand. *Siyempre ,bading, pahipo-hipo—pero wala naman siyang* bad intention!

(No comment.)

* * *

Host: What kind of fashions are you specializing in?

Guest: As a designer, I specialize in swimmer.

(Ano daw? Swimmer? Oh, swimwear!)

'Fahrenheit 9/11'

Michael Moore's documentary, "Fahrenheit 9/11," has started its run on the local film circuit. It is the most popular documentary to date, earning more than $110 million at the box office.

The controversial production has its admirers and critics. Local viewers now have the chance to see the movie and make up their own minds about it.

Digital

The Garage: Jesuit Communications Creative Technologies Center will hold its first digital film workshops, Nov. 8 to March 5 next year. The new filmmakers will be making digital films that are issue-oriented yet commercially viable.

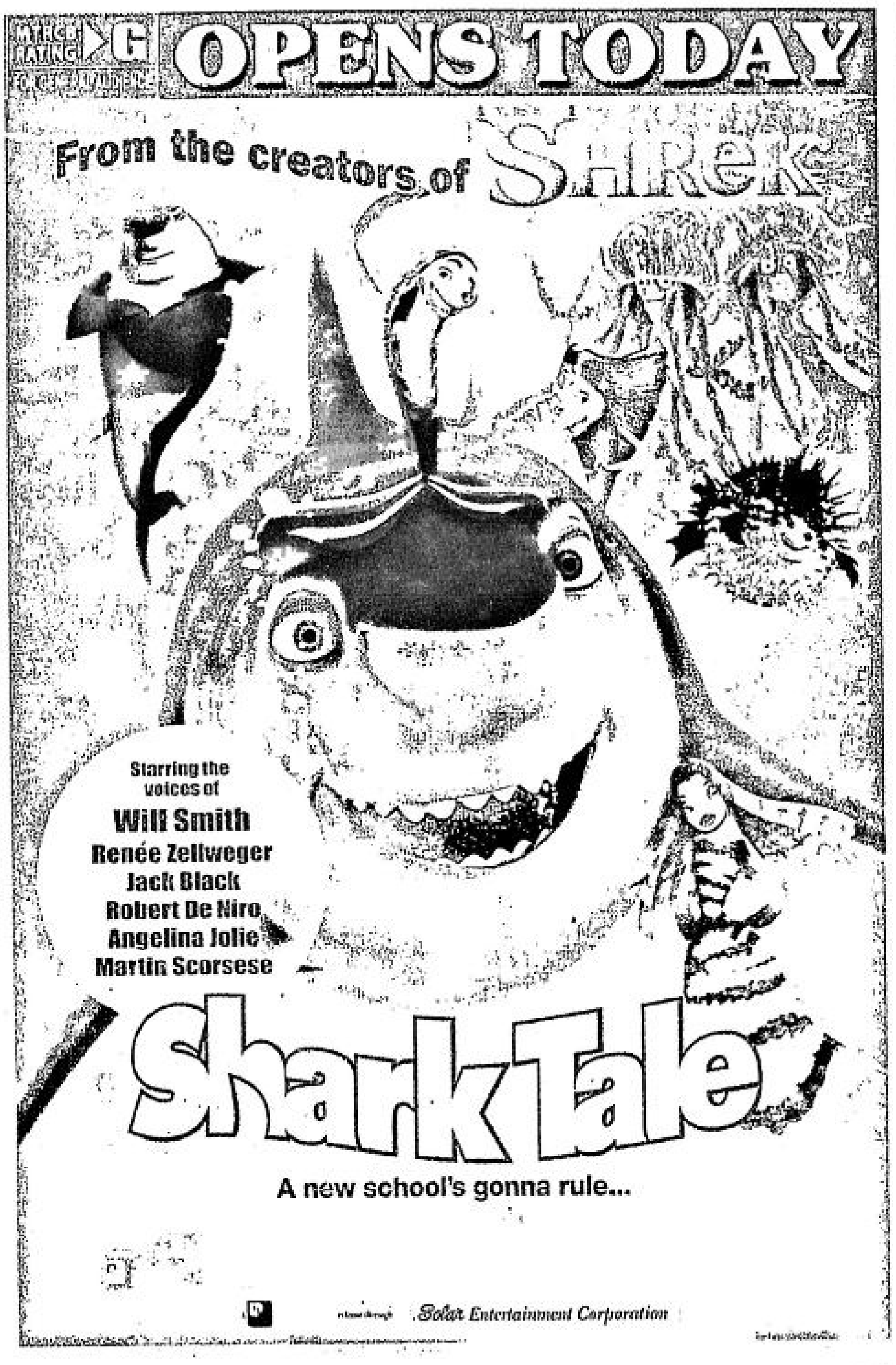
Courses are in scriptwriting, lighting and videography, film theory, directing, production design and art direction, storyboarding, conceptualization and creativity, editing, sound production, selling a movie, and production management and assistant direction.

Workshops in acting, documentary making and animation will also be available. Call 426-5971 or e-mail jcf@admu.edu.ph.

'OPTV'

Viewers with relatives working abroad should watch "OPTV: Overseas Pinoy Television." The tele-

WITHOUT/A27



MTRCB RATING G
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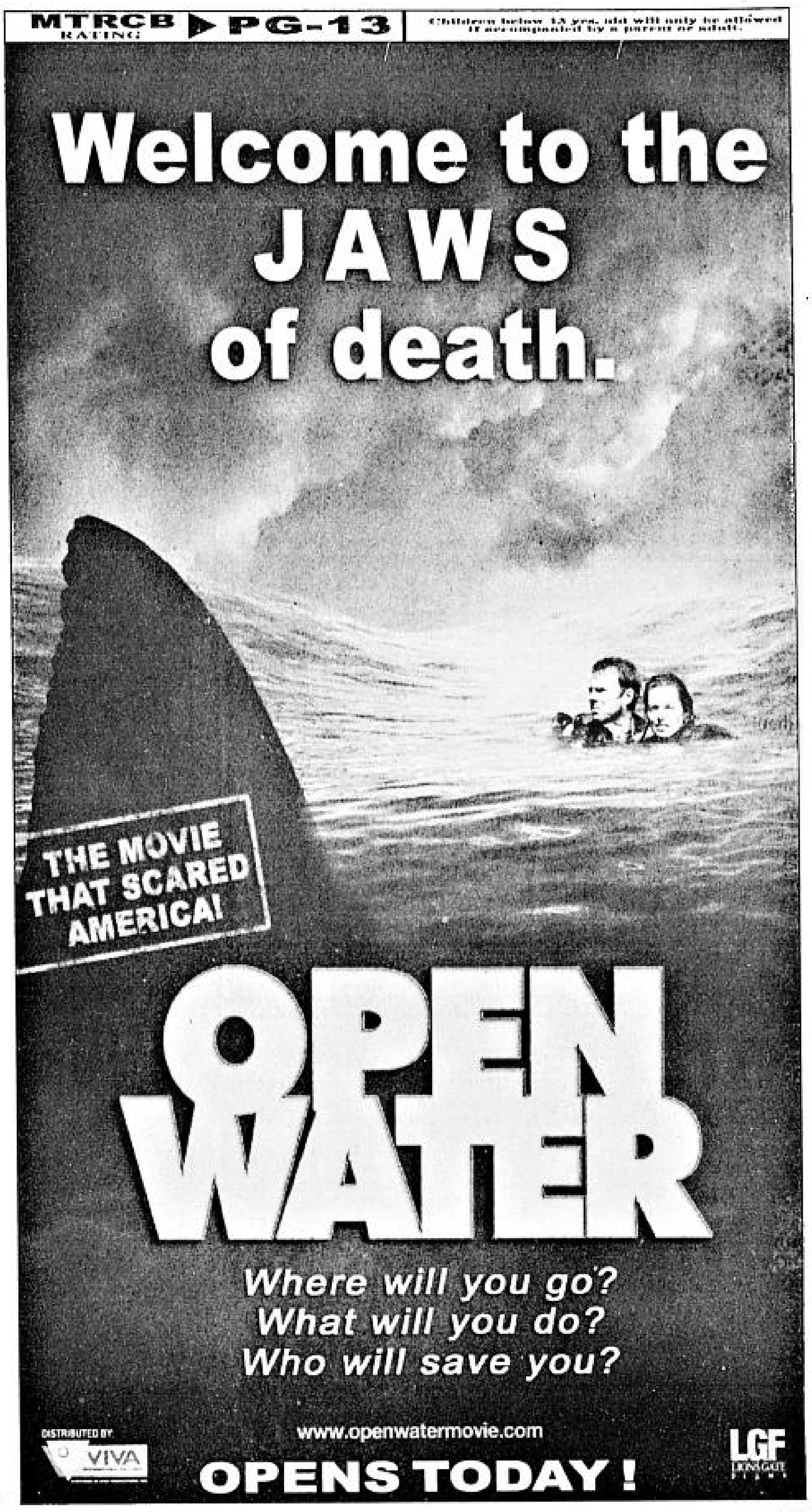
Renée Zellweger
Jack Black
Robert De Niro
Angelina Jolie
Martin Scorsese
Shark Tale
A new school's gonna rule…
Solar Entertainment Corporation



MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
Welcome to the JAWS of death.
THE MOVIE THAT SCARED AMERICA!
OPEN WATER
Where will you go?
What will you do?
Who will save you?
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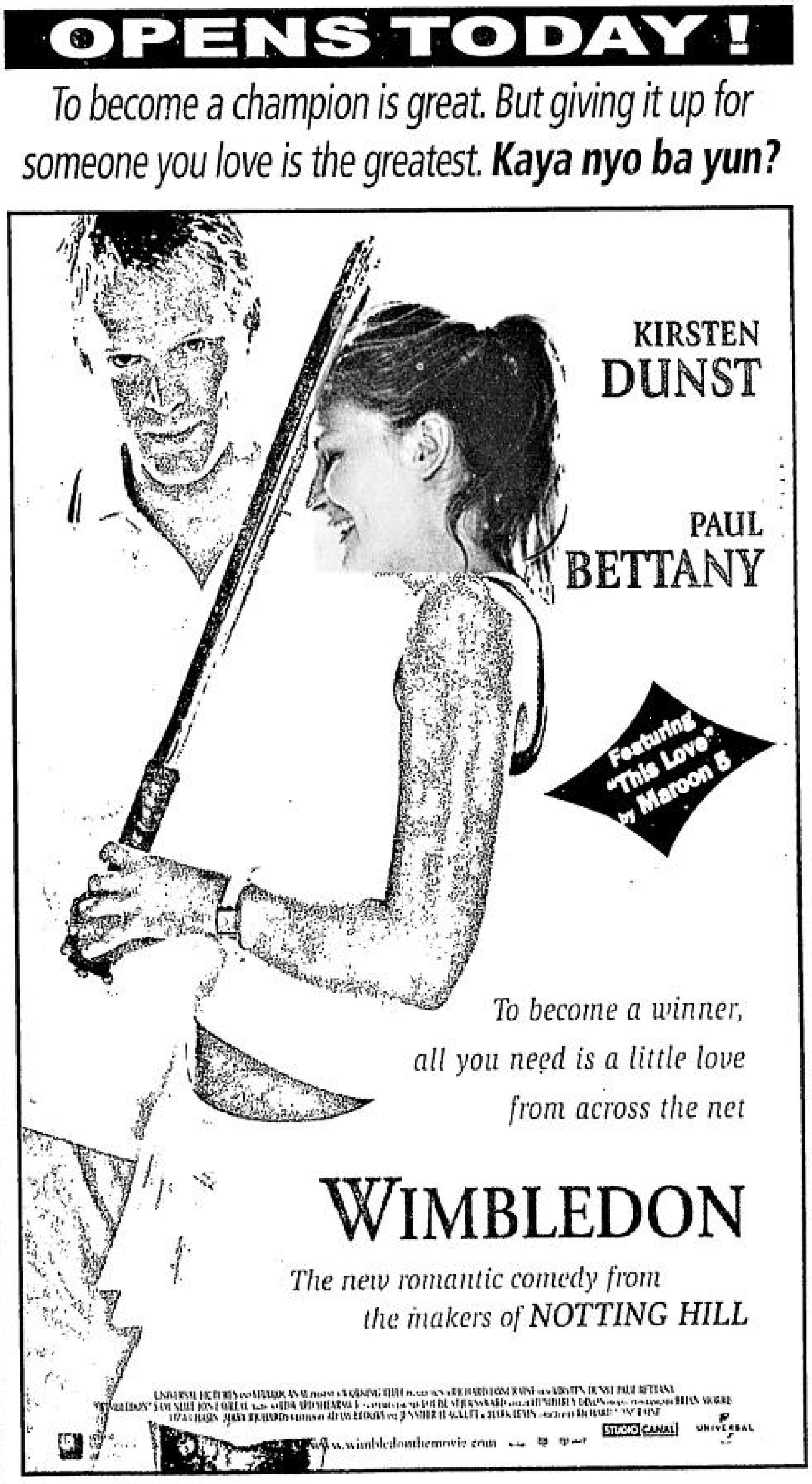
OPENS TODAY!
LGF LIONS GATE FILMS



OPENS TODAY!
To become a champion is great. But giving it up for someone you love is the greatest. **Kaya nyo ba yun?**
KIRSTEN DUNST
PAUL BETTANY
Featuring "This Love" by Maroon 5
To become a winner,
all you need is a little love
from across the net
WIMBLEDON
The new romantic comedy from
the makers of NOTTING HILL
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Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI-MALL CINEPLEX

3	Dolby SHARK TALE	12:10 pm 2:20 pm 4:30 pm 6:40 pm 8:55 pm
4	SDDS FENG SHUI	11:35 am 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm
5	dts RESIDENT EVIL: APOCALYPSE	12:10 pm 2:25 pm 4:40 pm 6:55 pm 9:10 pm
6	Dolby OPEN WATER	11.05 am 1.05 pm 3:05 pm 5:05 pm 7:05 pm 9:05 pm
7	Dolby THE PUNISHER	1:00 pm 3:40 pm 6:20 pm 9:00 pm

ARANETA COLISEUM

Oct 6	GINEBRA vs PUREFOODS 7:20 pm
Oct 8	BASIL VALDEZ & RICO PUNO CONCERT
Oct 9	ALICIA KEYS 2004 WORLD TOUR
Oct 10	GINEBRA vs STA LUCIA 6:30 pm
Oct 13	SAN MIGUEL vs GINEBRA 7:20 pm
Oct 16	JASMINE TRIAS CONCERT
Dec 11	JULIO IGLESIAS CONCERT
Dec 25	DISNEY ON ICE : Princess Classics

For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	HIBLA / MAPANUKSO
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	KERIDA
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1,2,3 & 4	SHARKTALE / WIMBLEDON / OPEN WATER / PUNISHER
PREMIERE THEATRE	SHARK TALE
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	SAVED
CINEMA-2	KRISANTA, IBA KA
CINEMA-3	ANACONDAS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	EXORCIST THE BEGINNING
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	HEAVEN'S POND
CINEMA-6	ALIEN VS PREDATOR
CINEMA-7	KAPAG PALAY NAGING BIGAS (RE-ISSUE)
CINEMA-8	DON'T TEMPT ME (RE-ISSUE)
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	RESIDENT EVIL APOCALYPSE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	RESIDENT EVIL APOCALYPSE
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	RAISING HELEN
CINEMA-12	SECRET WINDOW
CINEMA-14	BOURNE SUPREMACY
CINEMA-15	FENG SHUI
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PIÑAS)	ANACONDAS
CINEMA-1	FENG SHUI
CINEMA-2	DODGEBALL
CINEMA-4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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OPEN WATER PG13 12:00,2:00,4:00, 6:00,8:00,10:00	SHARK TALE GP 11:40,1:40,3:40, 5:40,7:40,9:40	SHARK TALE GP 12:20,2:20,4:20, 6:20,8:20,10:20
WIMBLEDON PG13 12:30,2:50,5:10,7:30,9:50	RAISING HELEN GP 12:35 5:15,10:10 RESIDENT EVIL 2 R13 2:55,7:35	PUNISHER R13 12:00,2:30,5:00,7:30,10:05

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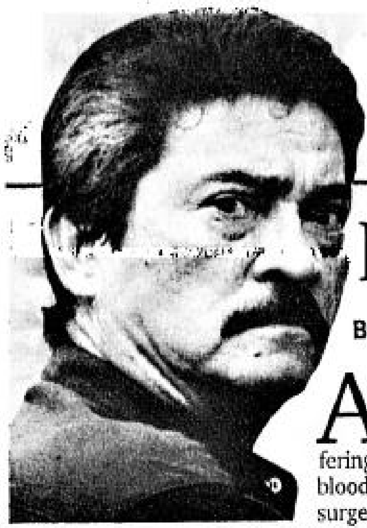
2	SHARK TALE 12:10, 2:35, 5:00 7:25, 10:20 GP
3	OPEN WATER 11:00, 1:05, 3:15, 5:15 7:20, 9:25, 11:10 PG-13
4	THE PUNISHER 11:55, 2:45, 5:35 8:25, 11:10 R-13

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

Text us your feedback: inquirer ent name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Editor Louie C. Camino



PAQUITO Diaz

Paquito Diaz suffered stroke, say director, co-star

By Nini Valera

ACTOR Paquito Diaz was rushed to the hospital last week after suffering a stroke due to high blood pressure. He had surgery to remove a blood clot in the brain, according to reports.

Diaz, who had just finished shooting the sex comedy "Shut Up, I-memorize Mo," is reportedly confined at the acute stroke unit of The Medical City in Pasig City.

But Diaz's son Joko Diaz, also an actor, refused to discuss details about his father's condition, saying he did not want the publicity.

"Shut Up" director Vic Belaro confirmed that Diaz was in the hospital. "I'm saddened that this happened to one of my stars," Belaro said in Filipino on the phone. "I haven't visited him."

"He was very healthy when we shot the movie," said bold actress Hanni Miller, Diaz's leading lady in "Shut Up." "He kept on joking."

The movie was completed in June but has not yet been released.

Miller said she last saw Diaz on the movie's last shooting day.

A check with The Medical City showed no Paquito Diaz was registered in the admission records. A woman who answered INQUIRER Entertainment's call to the hospital's information counter said there was a patient named Francisco Diaz registered in their records and the patient was in the hospital's acute stroke unit.

Hospital personnel refused to confirm if that Diaz was the actor.

Without further adieu, illegal procession of firearms and other boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: We have an exciting show for you tonight!

Co-host: Yes, with a very special guest who's always in the news these days!

Host: That's right. So, will you do the honors of introducing our special guest?

Co-host: Of course—without further adieu!

(—And, baboo to you, too!)

* * *

Host: What happened to turn the tide around in the Middle East?

Guest: Just when the situation was deteriorating and leading to the threat of war, *umapela ang mga* turkey *sa* United Nations!

(Gobble, gobble—we protest!)

* * *

Host: When you caught the alleged intruder with the gun, what case did you file against him?

Guest: Since there was no fatality, only illegal procession of firearms.

(*Ay*, illegal procession!)

* * *

Host: How old were you when you became an orphan?

Guest: My mother died at childbirth.

(Uh, say that again, please? S-l-o-w-l-y!)

* * *

Host: What is the effect of the long brownouts in your town?

Guest: It's terrible, everyone is affected—the businesses, everyone!

Host: That's too bad. *Nakakapasok pa ba ang mga bata sa trabaho?*

(Hey, that's child labor!)

* * *

Host: What is your advice to our beauty queen who's now competing in an international pageant?

Guest: She has to think positive! After all, all

WITHOUT/ A28

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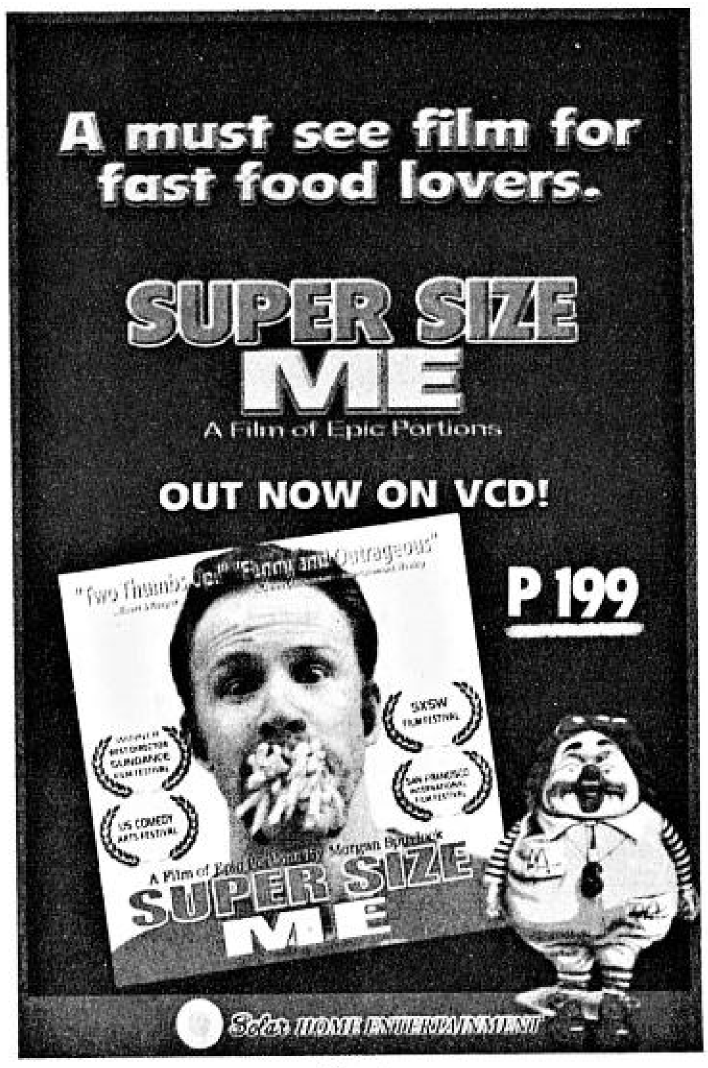

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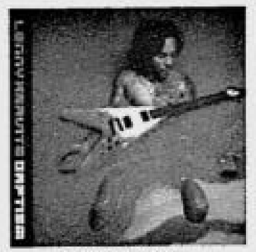
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Lenny Kravitz

Mm

Richard Marx

Nn

Norah Jones

Norah Jones

Oo

stacie orrico

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Pp

Petshop Boys

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Queen

Rr

Room 5

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Spandau Ballet

Tt

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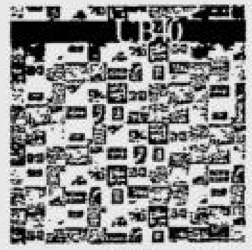
Uu



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Richard Marx	Right Here Waiting	MARX
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Rio planned 'everything'

By Marinel R. Cruz

RIO Diaz, who died Monday after a six-year battle with cancer, had planned everything about her funeral, including how she would be buried and the song she wanted to be played on that day, according to her closest friends.

"Rio laid everything out," writer-director Tats Manahan told INQUIRER Entertainment last Monday. "She planned everything herself. She wanted to be cremated. She also requested that instead of flowers, her friends could please bring bibles for the people of Negros."

"'Warrior is a Child' is Rio's favorite," said talent manager Angeli Pangilinan-Valenciano, wife of singer Gary Valenciano who composed and sang the inspirational piece. "She even requested for a copy of its music video."

INQUIRER Entertainment also learned that during the San Francisco leg of Gary's 2002 US tour, he and Rio met backstage. Rio requested Gary to sing "Warrior is a Child" on the day of her funeral, according to an eyewitness.

Rio was married to former Negros Occidental Rep. Charlie Cojuangco. Rio was herself former vice mayor of Pontevedra town in Negros. The Cojuangcos have two children—Claudia, 9, and Jayme, 7. Ali, Rio's 21-year-old son by former husband Hajji Alejandro, lives with his paternal grandmother.

Rio succumbed to cancer last Sunday night (10:30 a.m., Monday, Manila time) while confined at Seaton Hospital in Daly City, California. She was 45.

Gary described Rio as a "dear, dear friend." In a text message sent by Angeli to INQUIRER Entertainment last Monday, Gary said his day felt "heavy" when he heard of Rio's death. He dedicated to Rio a song that talks about God's love to His children.

Gary's song

"There is a song that I sing during moments like this," said Gary. "Let me share it with you, please:

"Now I think I know what He was trying to do./ Now I think I know what He had put you through./ Now I think I see the picture of it all, the gold-lined tapestry we knew as Your call./

"There were times when darkness shrouded paths of light yet you carried on not giving up the fight./ Thank you precious Lord./ I can hear You sigh, 'coz through it all You made her the apple of your eye./ There was not a price to pay that was too dear./ There was not a cross that you gave up as severe/ and letting on your plans be His and not your own, you've traveled round the world but now you've found your home./

"Standing now before Him, as the angels gather round./ There you are in white, a holy wedding gown./ Radiant joy streams now from your face, as the Master says 'well done, You've just won that long hard race.'

"My friend Rio will forever be in my heart," Gary V added.

RIO/A2-2

"DEAR, DEAR friend" Rio in a tearful hug with Gary V during a 1999 welcome party for her in Manila. At left, Rio in 2003

LEIGH in "Psycho" and in 2000

Janet Leigh; 77

LOS ANGELES—Janet Leigh, the wholesome beauty whose shocking murder in the classic Alfred Hitchcock thriller "Psycho" was credited with making generations of film fans think twice about stepping into a motel room shower, has died at her Beverly Hills home, her daughter's publicist confirmed Monday. She was 77.

The actress' husband, Robert Brandt, and her daughters, actresses Kelly Curtis and Jamie Lee Curtis, were at their mother's side when she died Sunday, said a spokesperson for Jamie Lee Curtis.

"She died peacefully at home," the spokesperson said.

Leigh had suffered from vasculitis, an inflammation of the blood vessels, for the past year.

The stunning blonde beauty enjoyed a long and distinguished career, appearing in such films as the 1962 political thriller "The Manchurian Candidate" and in Orson Welles' 1958 film noir classic "Touch of Evil." But she gained her most lasting fame in "Psycho" as the embezzling office worker who is stabbed to death in the shower by cross-dressing madman Anthony Perkins. The role earned her an Oscar nomination as best supporting actress.

Hitchcock compiled the shower sequence in 70-odd takes of two and three seconds each, for which Leigh spent seven days in the shower. Rumors circulated that she was nude, but she wore a flesh-colored moleskin.

Although tame by today's standards, the scene was shocking for the time for its brutality. .

Leigh wrote in her 1995 book "Psycho: Behind the Scenes in the Classic Thriller" that the filming was easy until the last 20 seconds when she had to express total horror as her character was being slashed to death.

She often said she hadn't been able to take a shower since the movie. "It's not a hype, not something I thought would be good for publicity," she insisted. "Honest to gosh, it's true." *AP*

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Rio planned ‘everything’

From page A2-1

Tats said she was also confined in the hospital when she heard of Rio's death. Tats, wife of ABS-CBN executive Johnny Manahan, produced and directed Rio's cancer video called, "Afflicted with Hope."

"I was sick, but she was sicker," said Tats. "I've had high fever since Wednesday. Last Sunday, I woke up in the middle of the night and started praying for her. The following day, I received a text message that her sister had been sending to her closest friends. That's how I learned of her death."

‘God will use you’

Tats said she spent a whole month with Rio filming the cancer video. "She asked me to do it," she recalled. "I couldn't say no to her even if I had not done anything for TV since 1995. We've been friends since her Mutya ng Pilipinas days. She said 'you have to do it. I know God will use you in this area'."

Pop diva Kuh Ledesma "felt very sad" about Rio's death.

"I'll miss her," said Kuh. "We became good friends because we shared the same faith and went to the same church. But she's with the Lord now. Although we didn't want her to leave us, how can we ever compare to Heaven?"

Rio, a born-again Christian, was a member of the Christian Commission Fellowship.

Sense of joy

"You're sad because you don't want to let somebody close to you go, but you know she was tired," said Angeli. "She surrendered herself and was excited to see the Lord. There is now a sense of joy. We know there will be a glorious welcome for her in Heaven."

Rio, who had been battling cancer since 1998, had had several remissions. The most encouraging was when she woke up from a 10-day coma early last year.

Rio was Mutya ng Pilipinas in 1976. She then joined the noontime variety show "Eat... Bulaga!" as one of its hosts in 1991. For four years from 1998, she hosted the cooking show "Sarap TV" on ABS-CBN with Jon Santos and Manilyn Reynes.

KUH shared the same faith

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DIET SWIMS INTO 'MARINA'

Fresh from the box-office hit "Volta" and the smash series "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas," Diether Ocampo joins the cast of ABS-CBN's top-rating teleserye "Marina." He plays the role of the merman Lirio, the son of Poseidon (Toby Alejar), the king of the sea. "Marina" is his fourth TV job with frequent co-star Claudine Barretto, with whom he was also paired in the movies "Dahil Mahal Na Mahal Kita," "Mula sa Puso: The Movie," "Gimik: The Reunion" and "Soltera."

TIN Arnaldo

Tin has a little of everything

TIN ARNALDO knows she is not a Regine Velasquez or a Vilma Santos, but she doesn't lose sleep over that. The "SOP" mainstay is happy with what she is.

"I may not be the greatest, but I can act, I can sing," she says. "I have a little of everything. For that, I'm glad."

As Yvette, the girl who made life miserable for everybody in "Twin Hearts," Tin showed she could go beyond her goody-two-shoes-image. In her recent solo show at Calesa Bar, she proved she could be a sultry singer.

"As I grow older, I see things in a different light," she says. "I learn from experience, especially negative ones.

"I'm a simple, private person. I'd rather keep a low profile."

For Tin, it's enough that she leaves a mark in whatever role or assignment she gets. She does not have to resort to controversy to get noticed.

"I get my strength from my mom," Tin reveals. "She's a strong person."

On Oct. 29 at the Dusit Hotel, people will see a Tin that's worlds apart from her trendy persona on "SOP Gigsters." They will see a more mature woman who draws strength from within herself. Hence, the show's title, "The Other Side of Me.".

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2 RAISING HELEN	2 RESIDENT EVIL: APOCALYPSE	2 FENG SHUI	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 RESIDENT EVIL: APOCALYPSE 2:35, 4:45, 6:55, 9:05, 11:15	2 13 GOING ON 30
3 THE BOURNE SUPREMACY	3 RAISING HELEN	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 THE BOURNE... 1:10, 3:30, 5:50, 8:10, 10:30	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 FAHRENHEIT 9/11 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30	3 DODGEBALL
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5 SECRET WINDOW		5 HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS	GUARANTEED SEATS 5 THE BOURNE SUPREMACY 2:10, 4:30, 6:50, 9:10, 11:30	5 FENG SHUI
		6 RESIDENT EVIL: APOCALYPSE		
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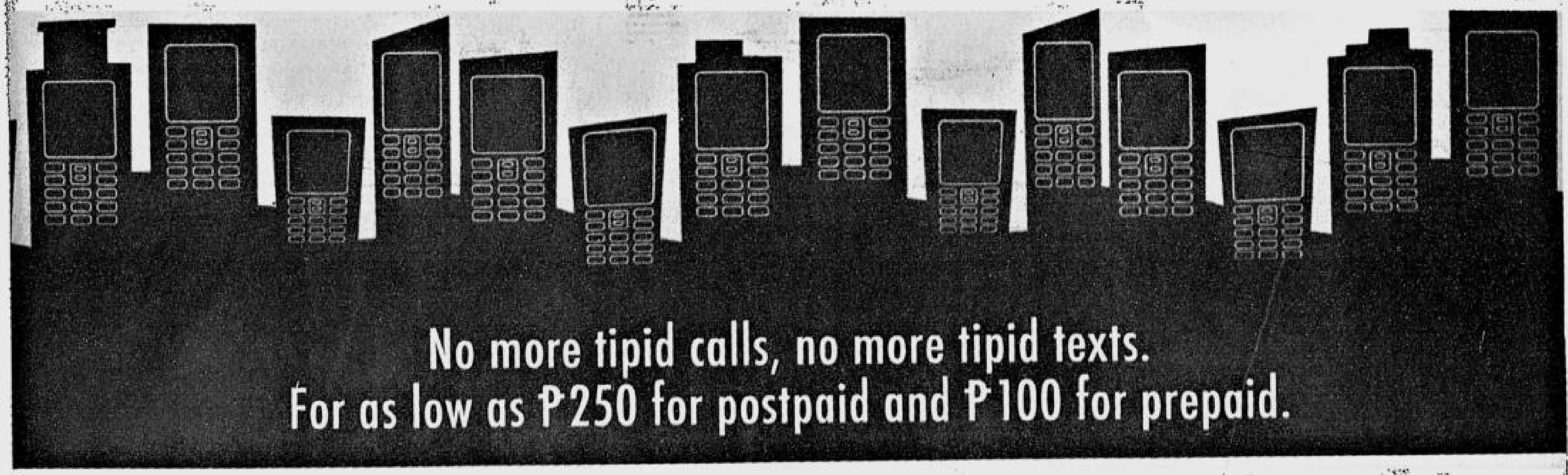

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Oil firms raise diesel, kerosene prices

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER some "haggling" with local oil firms, the Department of Energy was able to convince Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Caltex Philippines Inc. and Total (Philippines) Corp. to implement a diesel and kerosene price increase of only 35 centavos a liter instead of the originally planned 70-80 centavos a liter.

Shell and Total implemented their pump price increases at 12:01 a.m. yesterday, while Caltex imposed its price hike at 12:01 p.m.

New oil player Flying V likewise raised diesel and kerosene prices by 35 centavos a liter at 6 p.m. yesterday.

Shell general manager for external affairs Roberto Kanapi said in a telephone interview yesterday that the 35-centavo increase was the result of market research that the company conducted before deciding on the adjustment.

"When we felt that the market can't accept the 70 centavos, we adjusted. It's market forces at work," he said. "Before we announced, we sensed the market. We'd like to avoid a rollback as much as possible."

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said in a statement yesterday that the balance of 35-45 centavos a liter would likely still be imposed, but at a later date, probably by next week.

"After much haggling with the oil firms, we are pleased that they have remained sensitive to our appeal for a smaller and staggered price hike," he said.

While agreeing to raise diesel and kerosene prices by only 35 centavos a liter, he said the oil firms also gave their assurance that pump prices of unleaded gasoline would remain steady.

Motorists could still be subjected to more price increases in the next few weeks as oil firms still had some under-recoveries, Consumer and Oil Price Watch (COPW) chair Raul Concepcion said.

Under-recoveries represent international price fluctuations that are not reflected in local pump prices.

As the price of diesel based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products continued to soar, he said finished product importers would likely bear the brunt of the diesel price burden, which would then prompt them to pass this on to consumers.

According to COPW's computations, he said new players still had under-recoveries of P1.74 a liter for August and 34 centavos a liter for September.

As a result, new oil players, unlike refiners Petron Corp. and Shell, would have to pass on to end-users a total of P2.08 a liter through pump price increases.

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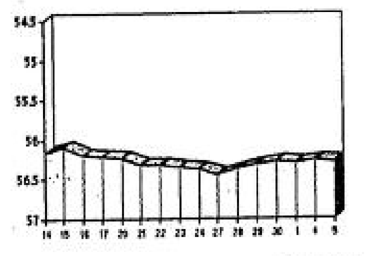

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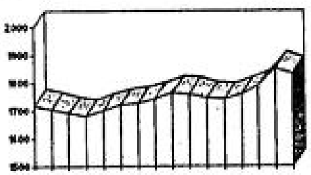

(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARE prices closed 0.99 percent lower yesterday in a technical correction after the market rose to a 55-month high on Monday and with investors concerned that rising inflation could lead to higher interest rates, dealers said.

The market failed to hold on its early gains but a continued rally in heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) limited losses.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index shed 18.25 points to 1,833.35 after trading between 1,829.84 and 1,865.64.

Volume was 1.77 billion shares worth P1.24 billion after 1.54 billion shares worth P1.56 billion on Monday.

The broader all-shares index was down 10.87 points at 1,117.92.

Losers outnumbered gainers 48 to 34, with 45 stocks unchanged.

The market opened 40 minutes late yesterday due to technical glitches.

"The market is correcting and is likely to remain in consolidation mode in the next session although the bullish sentiment remains intact," said Gomer Tan of Regina Capital Development Corp.

"Investors will naturally be tempted to cash in on those (recent sharp) gains and re-assess their positions before preparing for the next wave of buying," said Mark Alan Canizares of Citiseconline.com.

Inflation accelerated to 7.2 percent in September, pushing the inflation rate above the government target for the year as costs rose across the board, official figures showed yesterday. In August, inflation ran at 6.8 percent.

Dealers said the inflation figures raised concerns the central bank might have to increase interest rates but noted that strong export figures for August may have helped steady nerves. AFP

Gov't to increase LTO, LTFRB fees

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communication has prepared a draft order calling for a huge increase in the fees and charges of the Land Transportation Office and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board starting the fourth quarter of the year.

LTO is planning to raise its fees and charges by an average of 170 percent once the order is approved. This would allow the transport agency to increase its annual collection by about P535 million, according to LTO chief Anneli Lontoc.

The cost of a non-professional driver's license, for instance, would be raised to P600 from the current P180, representing a 233-percent increase once the department order is approved and issued. For professionals, the cost of a new license would be raised to P450 from the current P240.

"There is a draft department order. Once that is issued, we are given 15 days before implementing it. I think the increase in fees could take effect within the year," Lontoc said in an interview.

Revenue reforms, according to transport officials, were being pushed to help the Macapagal administration keep its budget deficit at an estimated P197.8 billion this year.

The transportation department said it would deliver about P33 billion in revenue to the government this year, up from P30 billion in 2003. By 2005, the agency said it could contribute about P44 billion to state coffers.

The LTO is one of the top earning government agencies, collecting fees from the issuance of

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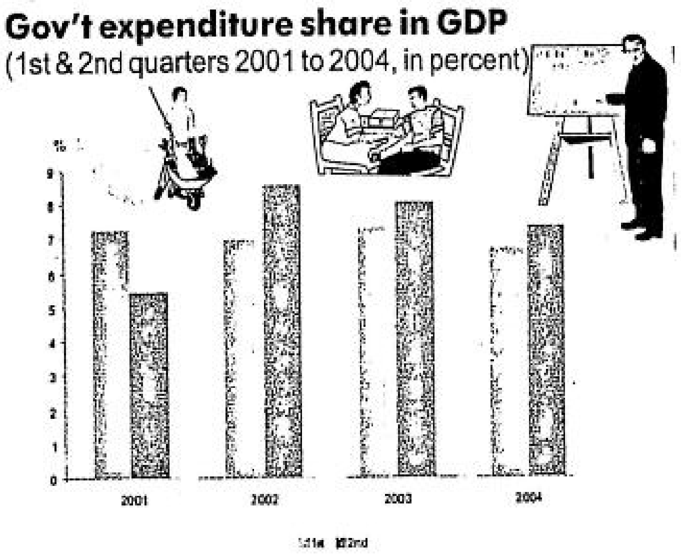
Gov't expenditure share in GDP

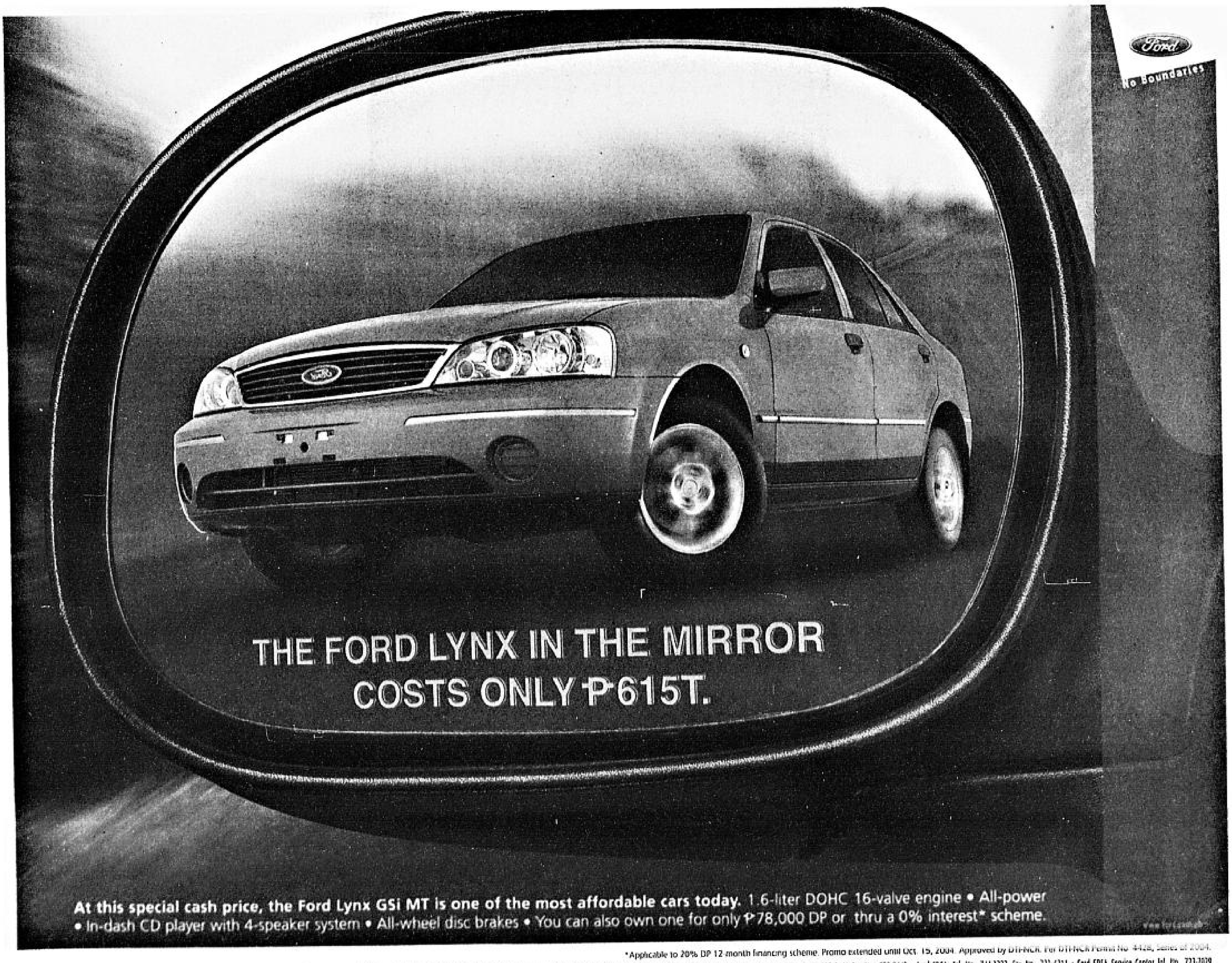
(1st & 2nd quarters 2001 to 2004, in percent)



Source of raw data: National Statistical Coordination Board

GOVERNMENT spending grew by 0.1 percent in the second quarter this year. It accounted for only 7.36 percent of gross domestic product, down from 8.06 percent in the same quarter last year when its growth contracted by 5.4 percent. Government expenditures include employees' salaries, advertisements, health, educational and other social services.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research



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Court OKs Nenaco debt restructuring

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE MANILA Regional Trial Court yesterday approved the 10-year restructuring of Negros Navigation Co.'s P2.4-billion debt.

As a compromise with creditors, the court directed the ailing shipping company to increase its interest payment to secured lenders to 7.5 percent yearly beginning the fifth year up to the 10th year of rehabilitation program, from 5 percent during the first to the fourth year of the program.

Unsecured creditors will be paid an interest rate of 2.5 percent yearly.

The court approval will allow Nenaco, a subsidiary of Metro Pacific Corp., to finance about P3 billion in capital and drydocking expenses during the period.

The company expects to turn around its financial performance by the third year of rehabilitation.

Nenaco president Sulficio Tagud Jr. yesterday said this development would also allow the company to focus on improving operations, instead of worrying over its debt problem. Nenaco's debt peaked at about P4 billion seven years ago.

Tagud has yet to receive the court approval but said he was informed by its lawyers about the decision.

He said Nenaco was projected to remain in the red in the first two years of rehabilitation starting 2005. By the second year, he said the forecast was to reduce the net loss to only about P5 million.

Nenaco posted a net loss of P8.2 million in 2003 from an income of P102.7 million in 2002.

"We want to charge all the mistakes of the past on the current year so we will be in a better position to move forward," said Tagud.

Nenaco's fleet is down to nine ships. Competitors, including Aboitiz Transport, operate more than 20 ships.

First Pacific Co. Ltd. managing director Manuel Pangilinan earlier vowed to get involved in turning Nenaco around for the sake of Metro Pacific, the local subsidiary of First Pacific.

Of Nenaco's P2.4 billion in financial obligations, P914.8 million was categorized as priority obligations as it was brought about by operating expenses, including salary.

The shipping firm's secured bank debt stood at P578.26 million, unsecured debt with other financial institutions at P202.13 million and unsecured payables, P191.215 million.

$400 MILLION IN NEW INVESTMENTS

Toledo, Cebu—President Macapagal-Arroyo announces the infusion by Mirant Global Corp. of a fresh $400-million investment into the power sector. Of the amount, $300 million was earmarked for the expansion by 350 megawatts of the power generating capacity in Pagbilao, Quezon, while $100 million will go to Toledo, Cebu. With the President are Tourism Secretary Ace Durano, Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, Mirant Philippines president/CEO Edgardo Bautista and Mirant Corp. CEO Marce Fuller.

UCPB selling P13.6B worth of assets to Korean firm

By Doris C. Dumlao

UNITED Coconut Planters Bank is set to sell P13.6 billion worth of idle assets to a unit of Korean investment management firm Shinhan M&A.

UCPB president and CEO Jose Querubin yesterday said the bank had reached an agreement in principle with First Sovereign Funds Corp., an asset management company set up by Shinhan's local affiliate Pennsylvania Capital.

"We should be able to close the agreement with First Sovereign Funds Corp. and get the requisite regulatory approvals very soon," Querubin said.

He noted that the transaction would chop off by more than 55 percent the real and other properties owned and acquired (ROPOAs) of UCPB.

"This is a landmark deal for the Philippine banking industry. We think it will create a very bullish climate for SPV (special purpose vehicle) transactions and we expect to see more banks following UCPB's lead," said First Sovereign Funds chair Han Kim.

Querubin said UCPB, its financial adviser PricewaterhouseCoopers and legal counsel Sycip Salazar Hernandez & Gatmaitan Law Office were now working on the agreement with First Sovereign Funds, targeting to consummate the deal before the April 8, 2005 deadline set by the SPV Law.

The SPV Law intends to help banks get rid of their non-performing assets by waiving some of the taxes and reducing fees imposed on the sale or transfer of assets.

The deal with First Sovereign Funds was hatched after a month of "intense" negotiations, Querubin said. The bank decided to negotiate with the company following two failed public auctions.

Ayala Corp. to raise bond float from P5B to P7B

AYALA Corp., the country's oldest conglomerate, has secured the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to increase its peso bond float from P5 billion to P7 billion.

Sources said Ayala will complete its bond offering, the biggest in the Philippines, on Oct. 7.

Underwriters or investment banks managing the bond offering were set to sign an agreement yesterday, amending the earlier issue size of P5 billion, said sources familiar with the deal.

Banks said the demand for the bonds was hefty given that half was from retail investors and the other from bigger institutional clients.

Ayala started offering the bonds to the public last Sept. 29.

The fixed rate bonds will carry a coupon rate of 12.677 percent per annum payable quarterly.

These bonds will mature in five years and one day or on Oct. 8, 2009.

Ayala expects to use the net proceeds to partially refinance its dollar-denominated bonds due in 2005. In peso terms, the bond is valued at P8.35 billion as of Aug. 31. The 2005 bonds were issued in 1999 by AC International Finance, Ltd., Ayala's wholly-owned subsidiary organized in the Cayman Islands. *Elizabeth L.Sanchez*

Nieto group asks court to lift TRO

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SHAREHOLDERS of listed firm Philcomsat Holdings Corp., led by former Ambassador to Spain Manuel Nieto Jr., have asked the Court of Appeals to lift an order that stopped the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) from validating the election of Nieto's group to the company's board.

In comments filed with the appellate court last Sept. 27, the Nieto Group also sought the dismissal of a petition of rival shareholder Victor Africa seeking the nullification of the said SEC order.

Africa claimed to be the de facto president of PHC's parent firm, Philippine Communications Satellite Corp., the country's oldest satellite communications firm.

PHC vice president Philip Brodett yesterday also asked the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) to take over Philcomsat and its mother firm Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Satellite Corp. (POTC), which is led by the Africa group.

"The government stands to lose here (if they don't takeover)," Brodett told reporters yesterday.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) was earlier barred from executing its order and participating in PHC's stockholders' meeting last Aug. 31 by a temporary restraining order issued by the Court of Appeals.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of October 5, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	22,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	19.5	19.75	19.25	19.75	1,366,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	47	47.5	47	47.5	2,327,100
China Banking Corp.	530	530	530	530	2,210
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	44	44	43.5	44	49,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28.5	29	28.5	28.5	195,000
Philippine National Bank	23	23	22.25	22.25	51,700
Phil. Savings Bank	27.5	28	27.5	28	40,700
Security Bank Corp.	21	21.25	21	21.25	4,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.5	24.5	24.25	24.25	5,100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	100,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	175	185	175	185	300
Manulife Financial Corp.	2455	2455	2455	2455	1,750
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	117	117	117	117	50
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1650	1650	1650	1650	540
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.5	23.5	23.25	23.25	38,400
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	1.22	1.26	1.16	1.22	94,594,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1180	1180	1140	1140	58,440
Ipeople Inc.	1.72	1.8	1.72	1.76	696,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.036	0.037	0.036	0.037	1,200,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	130,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	10,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.75	2.75	5,351,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	220,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1490	1500	1470	1470	159,700
Ivantage Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.68	0.68	2,770,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	54,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17	17	16.25	16.25	17,700
Manila Electric Co. B	25.5	25.5	24.25	24.25	1,433,700
Petron Corp.	3.05	3.1	2.95	3	6,514,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	41,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.42	1.5	761,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.3	6,374,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	40,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.36	0.38	0.36	0.38	180,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	220,000
Union Cement Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.55	2.6	13,402,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	131,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30	30	30	30	200,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	27	27.5	27	27	173,200
RFM Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	110,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	900,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57	57	78,300
San Miguel Corp. B	71	71.5	71	71.5	569,500
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.33	0.29	0.32	5,810,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0044	0.0044	0.0042	0.0042	131,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	35,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.6	23,155,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	10,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.4	3.45	3.4	3.45	3,526,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.031	0.031	0.029	0.029	8,900,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.4	1.44	1.4	1.42	1,051,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	112,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.7	1.7	40,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	40,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	16	16.5	16	16.5	36,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	1,310,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.58	0.58	12,610,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	500,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	480,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.16	0.16	0.14	0.14	1,410,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.24	2.26	4,724,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	1,600,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	4.1	4.15	4.1	4.15	37,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.66	0.66	30,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	28.5	28.5	27.5	27.5	316,500
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	150,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.075	0.07	0.0725	22,700,000
Ionics Inc.	2	2.02	1.98	2	241,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.96	1.98	1.96	1.98	474,000
Jolliville Holdings Corp.	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.1	172,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	155,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.26	1.28	2,123,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.59	0.61	0.57	0.57	76,870,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	5,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	200,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	160,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	36,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.165	0.17	6,720,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	400,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	81,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	200,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.15	0.15	0.145	0.145	120,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.69	1,980,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	21,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	170,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	24.25	24.25	23.25	23.25	295,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	6,200
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.2	6.3	6.2	6.3	95,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7	7	6.9	6.9	2,717,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	410,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.51	0.53	0.51	0.52	1,410,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.43	0.44	11,880,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.14	0.145	0.14	0.145	460,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.36	12,770,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.22	1.24	1.18	1.2	19,469,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	820,000
City & Land Developers	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.46	0.47	0.45	0.47	2,310,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.1	2.14	2.1	2.14	68,000
SM Development Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	2,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7	7	6.9	6.9	20,288,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	113,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3	3.05	3	3	62,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	4,060,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	4,870,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.016	0.017	0.015	0.016	218,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.02	0.02	0.018	0.018	93,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.007	516,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	8,700,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	600,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	2,000,000
Interport Res.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	4,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	28,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	47,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.22	0.22	0.21	0.21	400,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	500,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.6	56,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	3,700,000

CURRENCIES

October 5, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.813736	1.000000	56.2980
Japan	Yen	0.007336	0.009015	0.5075
United Kingdom	Pound	1.451705	1.784000	100.4356
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.104358	0.128246	7.2200
Switzerland	Franc	0.643575	0.790889	44.5255
Canada	Dollar	0.639779	0.786225	44.2629
Singapore	Dollar	0.482414	0.592839	33.3757
Australia	Dollar	0.585421	0.719424	40.5021
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.158565	2.652661	149.3395
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.216997	0.266667	15.0128
Brunei	Dollar	0.480988	0.591086	33.2770
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000110	0.0062
Thailand	Baht	0.019661	0.024161	1.3602
UAE	Dirham	0.221545	0.272257	15.3275
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.228900	69.1846
Argentina	Peso	0.273985	0.336700	18.9555
Brazil	Real	0.288456	0.354484	19.9567
Denmark	Kroner	0.134384	0.165145	9.2973
India	Rupee	0.017767	0.021834	1.2292
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214147	0.263165	14.8157
Mexico	New Peso	0.072012	0.088496	4.9821
New Zealand	Dollar	0.544560	0.669210	37.6752
Korea	Won	0.000708	0.000870	0.0490
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024026	0.029525	1.6622

DISCLOSURES

PCI LEASING & Finance Inc. purchased 172,000 of its shares at P1.32, pursuant to its shares buy-back program.

* * *

KEPPEL Philippines Marine Inc. will hold a special stockholders' meeting on Nov. 10 at 8:30 a.m. in the KPH Boardroom, Country Space I Building, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Salcedo Village, Makati City.

* * *

FIRST Metro Investment Corp. has approved the declaration of cash dividends worth P13.26 per share, equivalent to P499.9 million for its 37.7 million outstanding common shares.

* * *

SALCON Power Corp. announced the appointment of Antonio Corpuz as its chief operating officer with a rank of senior vice president effective Oct. 4.

* * *

ANSCOR Consolidated Corp. (ACC), a 100-percent owned subsidiary of A. Soriano Corp. (Anscor), bought 344,000 shares of Anscor. As of Oct. 4, ACC owns 713,212,777 Anscor shares.

* * *

ROXAS Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Nov. 24 at 10 a.m. at the New World Renaissance Hotel in Makati City. ***Compiled by D.J. Yap, PDI Research***

Bigger, better Cheng

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

ONE of Hong Kong's leading taipans, Cheng Yu-tung of the New World hotel and property fame, has emerged as the real owner of the new Hyatt hotel and casino in Ermita.

Cheng, no relation to the local Chengs of Piatco/Terminal 3 disaster, has been identified in the Monday issue of a Hong Kong paper, The Standard, as the beneficial owner of a little-known company that acquired one building plus several floors of the two-tower project of Andrew Tan's Megaworld.

The bayside hotel, incidentally, would be Cheng's second hotel venture in the country after the New World Renaissance in Greenbelt.

According to the grapevine, the HK billionaire, who also operates a container terminal in the Xiamen port, in addition to a cellular phone company in Hong Kong, is in talks with the Ayalas for another property venture in Subic.

Cheng, 78, a partner of Macau gambling tycoon Stanley Ho in the former Portuguese territory, acquired the Ermita property in the first quarter of 2003, after sending an architect and a lawyer from Hong Kong to inspect the project and meet with the Megaworld sales staff.

"At first, we did not have a clue as to whom they represented, and that they were THAT big," said a Megaworld official, who asked not to be identified.

Forbes has listed Cheng as the 231st richest person in the world for 2004.

The HK taipan reportedly pumped in a total of $120 million to acquire and finish the hotel and casino project, which had stalled when rumored original proponent Stanley Ho found himself a persona non grata after being embroiled in the BW Resources scandal.

The local Hyatt hotel will be the 14th venture of Cheng, whose hotels, including the Grand Hyatt in Hong Kong, are spread throughout China and the region.

Megaworld itself retains 40 percent of the two-tower Ermita complex, which the listed property firm plans to convert into serviced apartments, its first foray into the business.

The Hyatt hotel and casino complex are now on a soft run, preparatory to the formal opening in December.

The Cheng patriarch and his son Henry are expected to grace the opening ceremonies.

Not A-yala's

NOT a few passersby and motorists have been led to believe that a planned condominium complex in front of the Aberdeen Court on Makati Avenue is an Ayala project, with its "A" logo and a background color scheme confusingly similar to Ayala Center's.

Called "A. Venue," the residential-commercial complex is actually a project of Antel Land Holdings, a property firm controlled by the Lao family, which owns the La Elegancia jewelry shops.

Short takes

- SPURRED by McDonald's new Paseo de Roxas branch now recording the highest sales per square meter of all Philippine McDonald's branches, Jollibee has decided to build a store at the other corner of the same block, at the China Bank building, in an effort to catch some of the action.
- THE FORMER UCPB Savings Bank building in Legaspi Village has been sold for P90 million, considerably less than the asking price of P110.42 million.

The buyer has been identified as the Masterman Land Corp., a real estate company formed by Ramon, Elisa, Nandy, Kathrina, and Bryan, all surnamed Manaloto, of Mandaluyong City.

Heard through the grapevine

THE ICM sisters who operate the St. Theresa's College in Quezon City are putting up a branch of the all-girls school at the so-called McKinley Hills portion of The Fort.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com)

Banking system fragile, IMF says

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund has called on regulators to put more pressure on banks to shore up their capital to strengthen the industry.

In a recently released post-program monitoring report, the IMF said there was compelling reason for "more forceful efforts" from regulators because the banking system was "fragile and not well-equipped to contribute to future growth momentum."

The IMF was particularly concerned over the level of the banks' non-performing assets, saying that the amount was understated due to accounting loopholes.

Latest data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that the non-performing loans of universal and commercial banks as of end-July rose to 13.92 percent as ratio of total loans, from 13.77 percent as of end-June.

The sector's real and other property owned and acquired or Ropoas hit P207.11 billion during the period, as against gross assets of P3.64 trillion.

"(IMF) staff analysis indicated that once allowance was made for these factors, the banking system's capital adequacy fell well short of regulatory requirements, and of providing the system with enough scope to buffer major shocks such as an abrupt rise in interest rates," it warned.

The IMF, thus, said there was an urgent need for local banks to shore up their capital to strengthen the resilience of the banking system and enhance its ability to contribute to economic growth.

Citing its analysis of bank data, the IMF said low capitalization was one of the reasons behind the slow loan growth of the banking sector.

The IMF said the country's banking regulator agreed with its analysis, but pointed out that "the weaknesses lay in particular banks."

While the IMF welcomed the government's steps to strengthen the regulatory and supervisory framework, it argued that efforts to bring in the level of non-performing assets should be accompanied by greater pressure on banks to strengthen their finances and adopt best accounting practices.

The IMF expressed concern over the slow progress in resolving NPAs under the Special Purpose Vehicle framework.

The IMF thus argued that "significant NPA sales were more likely if the BSP put pressure on banks to enhance valuation and provisioning of non-performing assets, especially Ropoas, while enforcing the adoption of international accounting standards so that the resulting losses are reflected in the bank's financial statements.

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Gov't to increase . . .

From page B1

drivers' licenses and motor vehicle registration. Last year, the agency remitted about P7.5 billion to state coffers.

LTFRB Chair Maria Elena Bautista said the regulator would focus on increasing penalties for erring drivers and operators. She said the draft order for the increase in the LTFRB fees has not been approved.

Transport Assistant Secretary Roberto Castañares said land transport agencies would have to increase their fees ahead of the other attached agencies.

He said President Arroyo had a standing order not to increase fees related to the use of seaports and airports.

"We are trying to attract major airlines to land in the country and their request is to hold any increase in fees. The President is trying to encourage the use of roll-on, roll-off ferries so we are holding off any increase in the rates of the PPA (Philippine Ports Authority)," Castañares said.

Last year, the PPA delivered about P5 billion to the government, according to transport officials.

Aside from direct increases in fees and charges, the transport department is also working closely with other agencies to raise an additional P8 billion in revenue yearly from transport-related taxes and fees.

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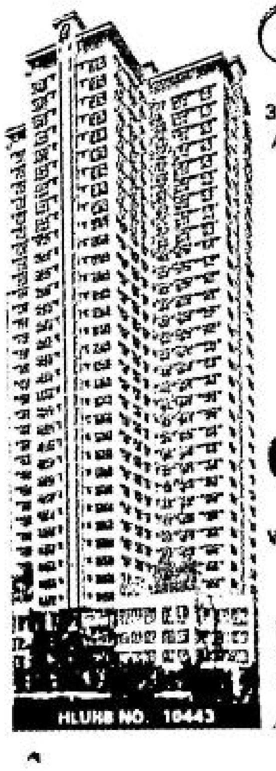

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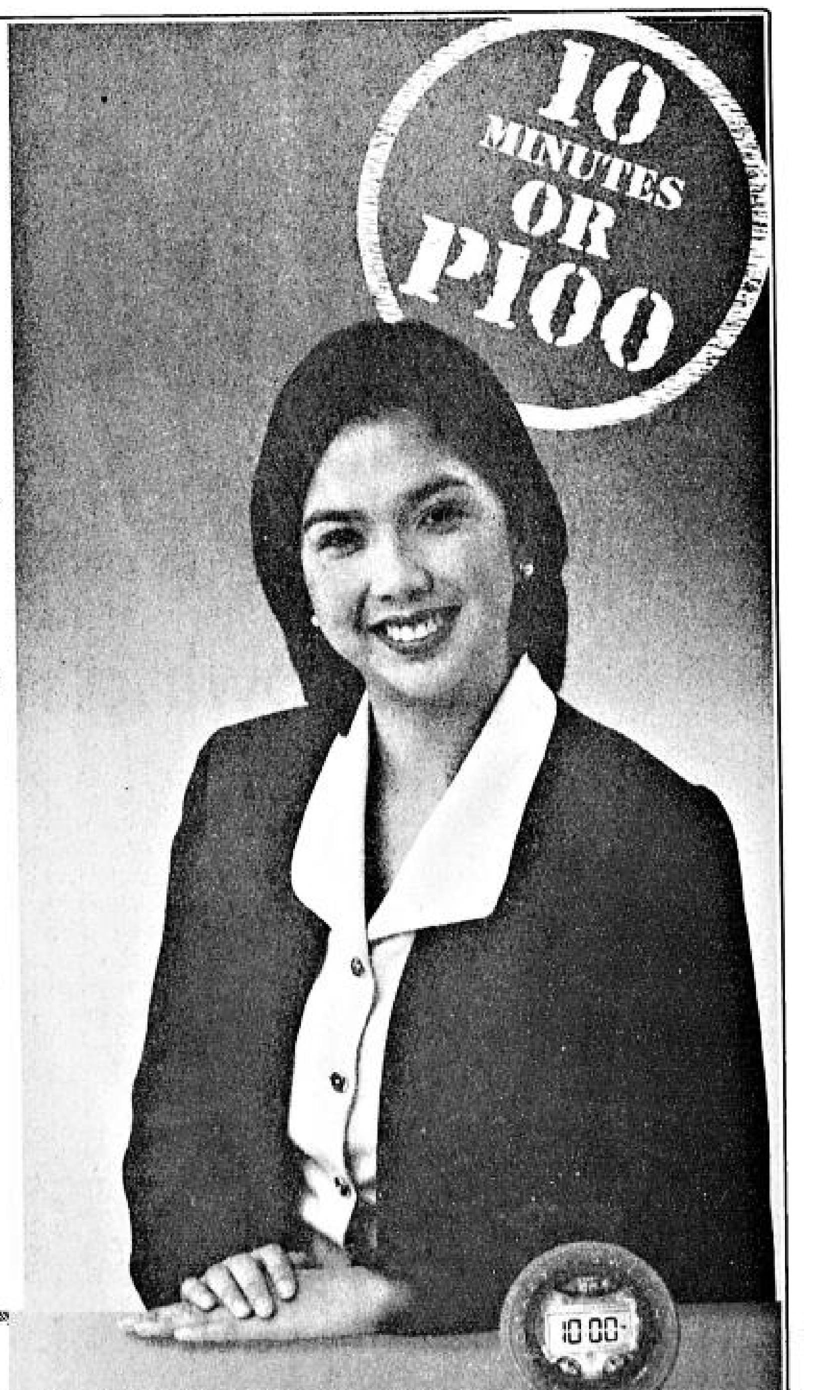

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1. Saturday banking transactions
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3. Jewelry loan transactions
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5. Bayad Center transactions
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Text us your feedback: inquirer paw name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)
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Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

What's the best leadership style?

DEAR WW: I need to strengthen my leadership skills. Any suggestions?
The Boss, But Not Bossy

Luis Chavarria had just been released from prison, when he was arrested again-this time for illegal possession of a firearm. The police were tipped off by doctors at the hospital, who were treating Chavarria's gunshot wound to the foot. Apparently, the shotgun he slept with discharged during the night.

Unfortunately, Mr. Chavarria isn't the only one shooting himself in the foot. Most bosses do it too—by relying on a single leadership style. A recent survey of 3,871 executives suggests that truly effective bosses vary their leadership style according to the situation. The survey identified six leadership styles. Read more about them in "Leadership That Gets Results" by Daniel Goleman (Harvard Business Review, March-April, 2000).

Do what I tell you. Goleman calls this the "coercive" style of leadership and it is the least effective of the six. Who wants to be bossed around? But in a short-term crisis, it can mobilize people quickly.

Do as I do, now. This is the "pacesetting" style and it's the second least effective. This leader is obsessed with doing things better and faster but doesn't make her expectations clear. "If I have to tell you, you're wrong for the job," she thinks. As a result, responsibility and initiative evaporate because people focus on second guessing her expectations.

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

Pacesetting can be effective with highly motivated, competent teams, however, if used in combination with other styles.

Try this. In this "coaching" style of leadership, leaders help employees identify their strengths and weaknesses, offer lots of feedback, and delegate challenging assignments to help people grow. Interestingly, while the leader's focus is on long-term results (the employee's growth), coaching delivers solid short-term payoffs as well because employees tend to rise to the level of their boss's expectations.

What do you think? This is the "democratic" style of leadership in which leaders build trust and commitment by soliciting people's ideas and buy-in. Not surprisingly, morale and productivity rise. A drawback can be the extra time required. The downfall can be using consensus to avoid decision-making.

How do you feel? Goleman calls this the "affiliative" style. The leader tends to his employees' emotional concerns, offers ample praise and gives workers great freedom in doing their jobs. The result is fierce loyalty.

This style is particularly effective for rebuilding teamwork, trust and morale. However it can leave some workers feeling rudderless, so it is best used in combination with the authoritative style.

Let's do this together. This is the "authoritative" (not authoritarian!) style of leadership. Authoritative leaders state a clear vision for their people and motivate them by making clear how their work contributes to that vision. People see why their work matters and are given flexibility in achieving their goals. This is the most positive leadership style and works in most situations—unless the leader is less experienced than his team.

Vary your leadership style to the situation and you shouldn't have to worry about any self-inflicted wounds.

Here are the results from a recent workingwounded.com/ABCnews.com online ballot: Who best represents YOUR leadership style? (1,132 ballots)

—Patton, 29 percent
—Einstein, 28.5 percent
—Oprah, 25 percent
—Regis, 17.5 percent

(*Mr. Rosner is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at* bob@workingwounded.com.)

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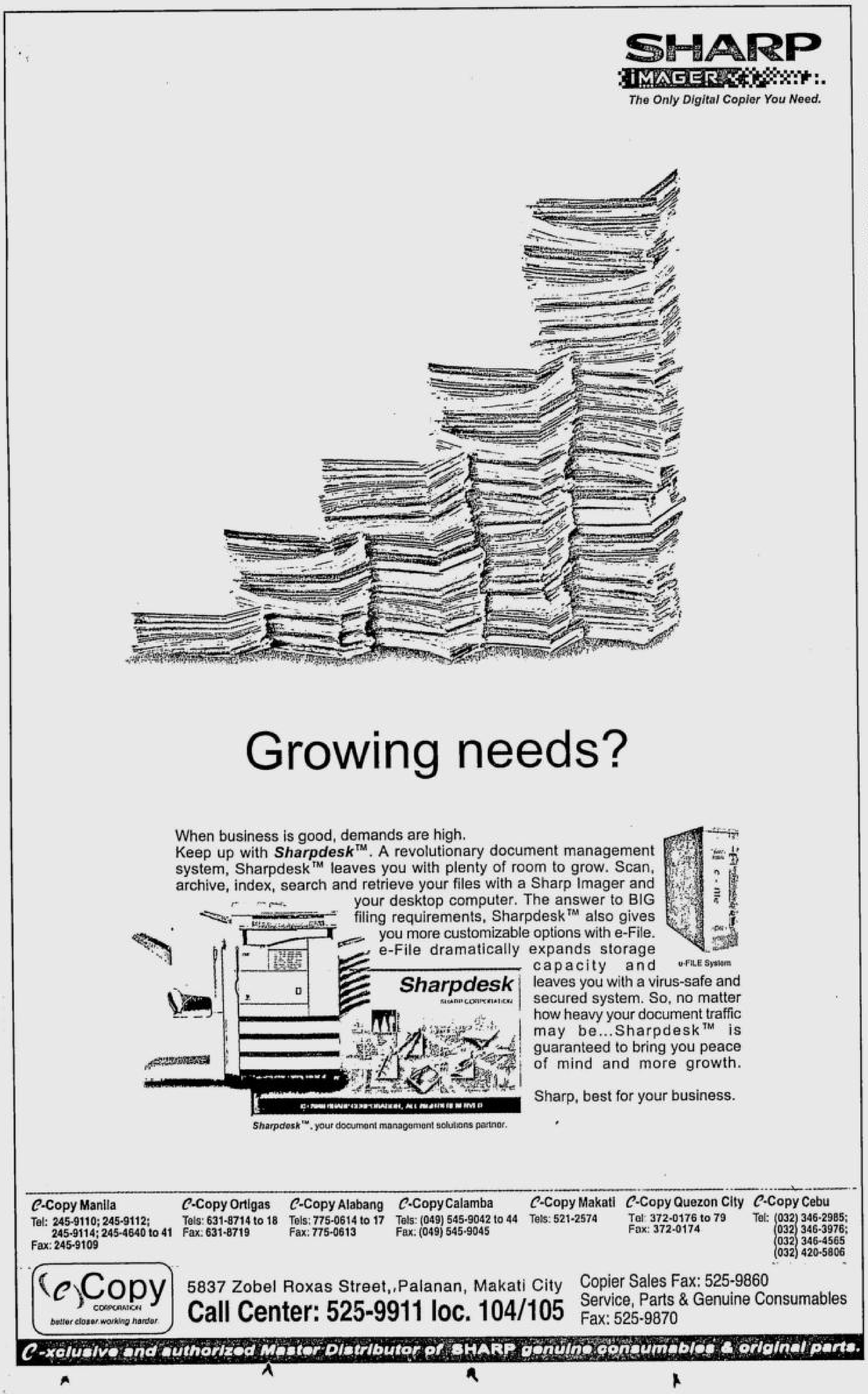

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'I want to work in the province'

By Tita Datu Puangco

Advice
FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

I AM 27 years old and I have been in the government service for almost five years now. I work in one of the national agencies in our country. My present status is permanent and my salary is comparatively higher than most people my age. However, I am a single mother so my salary is just enough to cover expenses for me and my one-year old. I maintain an apartment near my workplace. I hired a helper to take care of my one-year old.

Contrary to the impression that most government employees are idle and lazy, my job entails a lot of overtime without pay. It stresses me that most of the time I don't find quality time to spend with my kid. The traffic in Metro Manila is heavy and too time consuming. I am thinking of asking for reassignment to our regional office to beat the stress and provide a better environment for my kid.

I graduated from the state university and I can modestly say that my past work experiences provided me with necessary skills and credentials to advance my career. In fact, everyone is discouraging me to go to the province to pursue my career. They say that it is better to be in the national office because of its diverse career paths and higher salary grade. I choose otherwise because I have worked in a local government unit before, where I experienced rewarding work.

My reasons for planning to transfer to a regional office are the following: first, I believe that whatever workplace you choose, if you are willing to give your best, you can never go wrong. I am a professional, willing to learn and I easily get along with other people. Secondly, I can pursue my plans to enroll in a law school at minimal cost in a local state university. Third, I can find a much economical place to rent for me and my kid, and better living conditions.

In Metro Manila, I have to be content with cramped apartments to save money for rent. Not to mention the air and noise pollution that we have to endure everyday. Lastly, I am planning to invest in agriculture in the province like hog or poultry raising, or use my savings to lend capital to farmers. I wish to be an entrepreneur in the long run so I can retire from government early and tend to my business. Those are my passions and I don't think the urban setup will provide me the opportunity to set up a business.

I don't know if it's the best thing because it could mean a complete overhaul in my secure job. I hope you can provide some insights on my current situation. Is this normal for me to feel burned out with the routine work? Is it worth taking the risk of leaving everything behind for some unfounded theories? My passions lie in arts, environment, writing and reading. I think that I deserve quality time and better living conditions to pursue these things to enjoy my life thoroughly.

Thank you so much for taking time to read my letter. I look forward to your enriching advice. More power!

Anxious Government Employee

I agree completely with your decision to go to a regional government office to pursue the quality of life you deserve. I think the primary consideration would be your one-year-old son who will grow up under your care in a less stressful environment.

I grew up in the province before moving to the city to pursue my college degree and then work. Deep in my heart, I also yearn to go home to the province and leave behind the noise and polluted air of the city. But I don't have the courage, now that most of my working life has been spent in the city. Also, with grown up children who love the city, my husband and I would prefer to remain here and stay close to them. In your case, go ahead. It looks like the key to your dreams—going back to school, setting up a business, etc.—is all in a regional setting

What you are experiencing are fears of losses related to the transition. So go ahead and confront them by asking yourself the following questions: What are the worst things that can happen to you? Then, one by one demystify them. You will discover that your fears are bigger than reality. Next, ask yourself what others would envy if you do make the move? List all the advantages. Then,

I WANT B5

Working at home makes the differently abled self-sufficient

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

ALL ABOUT WORK

NESTOR Baltazar, Jr. suffered from a spinal injury and has been confined to a wheelchair for years. Yet, in spite of his debilitating condition, he strives to make a life, and yes, even a career, for himself with the help of The Nova Foundation For Differently Abled Persons, Inc.

Like Baltazar, handicapped individuals and parents of special children who are bound to their homes or wheelchairs can now look forward to a normal productive life with the Work-at-Home Project designed specifically for the differently abled by The Nova Foundation. The Work-at-Home Project for Persons with Disabilities Through Available Information and Communication Technology was recently launched by The Nova Foundation to honor its 25 beneficiaries.

With the help of the World Bank Group, The National Council for the Disabled Persons, Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), Visions and Breakthroughs International, Inc., Total Transcriptions Solutions Inc. (TTSI) World Net Services, Infocom and Spinal Cord Injury Foundation, Inc., The Nova Foundation is able to help several disabled individuals in making a sustainable livelihood for themselves.

Overcoming immobility

In it's commitment to better the lives of differently abled individuals, The Nova Foundation submitted the Work-at-Home project to the World Bank's first Philippines Development Innovation Marketplace Panibagong Paraan competition. Out of the 1,800 proposals submitted nationwide, the Work-at-Home project was chosen and given a grant sponsored by the AusAID.

One of the major obstacles of disabled people who wish to work is mobility. While the rest of the working abled zips in and out of the city without a thought, commuting from the home to the workplace is a major task for the differently abled. Thus, their dreams of making a career for themselves and contributing to a better society remain a dream. In addition to this is the financial challenge for special education or training. And although some are actually college graduates and equally qualified as the rest of the abled population, most differently abled people still find it hard to get into the corporate world. The Nova Foundation recognizes and addresses these challenges with the Work-at-Home Project.

"We would like to create equal opportunities for the differently abled and it's hard to get it from the corporate world. We would like to help those who are just in their homes," claims Sheryl Rose Dira, training coordinator of The Nova Foundation.

Medical transcription

The project, headed by Manuel V. Agcaoili, president and trustee of The Nova Foundation, aims to train persons with disabilities at home and provide them with jobs that will allow them to stay at home. Medical transcription, a growing and promising outsourced industry, presents itself as the future employment vehicle for wheelchair users and parents of children with special needs requiring full time home attention. The project will thus provide training on medical transcription with a curriculum designed according to the requirements of TTSI, a partner of The Nova Foundation.

The six-month training will cover medical terminology, English proficiency and medical dictations for transcription proficiency. The training module will be made available to the participants via the Internet through "distance-training." The beneficiaries will be evaluated monthly and quarterly. Those who pass the training will immediately be given jobs in the medical transcription industry by TTSI. "As soon as they finish the training we're going to train them how to transcribe medical data via the Internet and transfer written data into a written file," adds Dira.

Work-at-Home beneficiaries gather during the project launching.
CANDY G. VILLANUEVA

Training materials are presently available at The Nova Foundation's web server (www.novafoundation.ph). The Nova Foundation aims to be able to make these materials available to future members of the foundation. With the growth of the information technology, the foundation hopes to make the project available to every disabled person in the country.

Screening of beneficiaries

Confined to a wheelchair herself, Dira found the screening process exhausting and difficult. "It was really tough because a lot of the differently abled would really like to grab the opportunity but unfortunately they are not medically equipped, they don't have the medical background and most of them don't have the exposure. They're not proficient with the English language also. That was so hard at the start especially because most of the differently abled are sensitive but I had to stick with our rules."

The tedious elimination process produced 25 beneficiaries. Of those suffering from polio, celebral palsy and spinal cord injury, 17 are in wheelchairs and three are with mobility impairment. The other five participants are parents of autistic children, who require full time attention and home care. Dira assures other aspiring differently abled persons that the project will take in new applicants every six months.

In the meantime, the first batch of the Work-at-Home project is grateful and excited to start with their training. "We would like to express our deepest gratitude with regards to this opportunity," says Baltazar in behalf of the whole group. "It's a once in a lifetime offer and we cannot let it slip away which is tantamount to neglecting a decent living, more importantly, closing down already opened doorways."

With this program, Baltazar and the rest of the beneficiaries hope to be gainfully employed and to be active contributors to society. Baltazar adds that the program teaches them not to feel sorry for themselves but to rise above their disability. "Now it is time to take advantage of our being disabled and prove to ourselves that we are not only just that and sometimes we are more able than some of the abled people. It's not all about the money, you know, but having self-worth.".

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THE ATENEO Center for Organization Research and Development (Ateneo CORD) wishes to invite everyone to its Trendwatcher Series on Retaining Employee Talent on Oct. 19 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the LS Virata Hall, DAP Bldg., Pasig City.

This learning session will feature the results of two studies: Employee Retention Factors and Retaining and Managing Young Workers. Find out what factors make employees want to stay or leave their organization. Learn what young workers of today look for in a job and boss and what will make them leave or stay in an organization.

Contact Ateneo CORD for reservations (632) 426-6001 loc. 5263, 426-5931 or 426-6282. Or e-mail ateneocord@admu.edu.ph.

UP Solair invites alumni to 50th anniversary celebration

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines School of Labor and Industrial Relations (U.P. Solair) calls on its alumni to get involved in the various events lined up for this golden commemoration. Solair celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

Solair traces its roots to the Asian Labor Education Center (ALEC), established in 1954. Through the years, the College evolved from undertaking mainly workers' education through seminars and residential institutes for labor leaders from the Philippines and other Asian countries to a full-fledged graduate school offering a Diploma and Master of Industrial Relations (DipIR and MIR) degree, together with specialized training and certificate programs in labor law, disputes settlement, human resources development, labor policy research, conferences and symposia, among others.

The main events will be held from Dec. 3 to 4. Solair also invites the public to attend the lectures. The celebrations, which will run from September to December this year, include the following:

- U.P. President Francisco Nemenzo's lecture "Philippine Labor Struggles: Contest of Ideas"
- Faculty lecture series on the theme "Political Economy and Philippine Industrial Relations"
- Dean Froilan Bacungan's Distinguished Public Lecture in honor of Dr. Cicero D. Calderon: "Agenda for Philippine Labor Law Reforms"
- Philippine Industrial Relations Society's (PIRS) National Conference "Quality Partnerships Towards a Decent Workplace: Blending Homegrown with Global Practices and Strategies"
- Unveiling of the Commemorative Mural and Opening of Photo Exhibit on "Labor Empowerment and Industrial Relations"
- Roundtable Discussion "The Role of Labor Education Center/Asian Labor Education Center in Workers Education in Asia"
- Reminiscence and Memoirs; Awarding of Special Recognitions
- Symposium on "Strengthening Philippine Unionism in the Age of Globalization" U.P. Solair in cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Philippine Office
- Grand Alumni Homecoming of U.P. Solair Alumni, in cooperation with the PIRS

For details, please contact Ian or Fina at telefax 920-7717, Mayet or Zeny at 927-8340, Didi or Edgar at 928-6396, and Del at 920-7693.

'I want to work in the province'

From page B4

plan for the next five small steps to begin to implement your plan.

In addition, you can do potential problem analysis to arrive at a preventive and contingency plan. Typical questions are: what can go wrong? What will trigger things to go wrong? What will you do if things go wrong? What actions can you put in place to prevent things from going wrong?

May God bless your move to the region. Take care.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to* 892-2902.)

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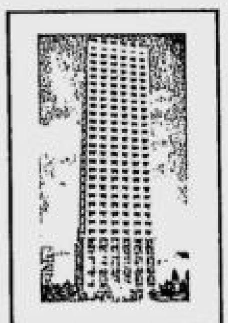

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@MASCO – 7543581 / 8130719

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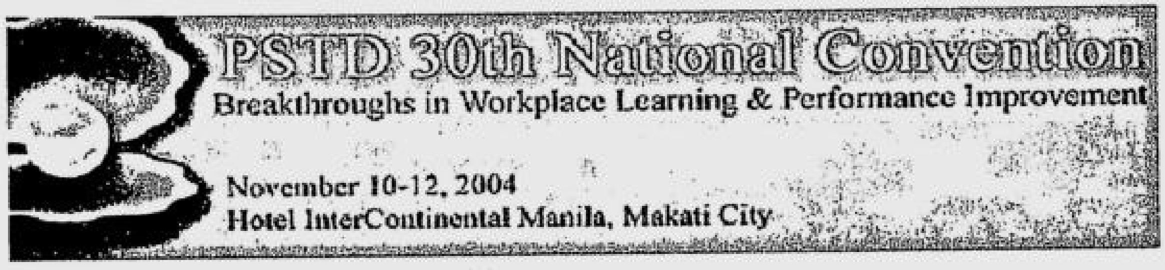

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NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Dilliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE OF ONE-YEAR WASTE OIL GENERATION FOR EMB-DENR ACCREDITED WASTE TREATERS ONLY

"AS-IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING: October 26, 2004, 2:00 p.m. Solarium Hall, Building-1, NPC Head Office Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

This public bidding is for the sale of one-year waste oil generation from the following:

NPC SPUG PLANT AND LOCATION	ITEM DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM BID PRICE (per Liter)
SCHEDULE-1 CATANDUANES-MASBATE AREA 1. MARINAWA DPP 2. BALONGBONG HEP 3. VIGA DPP 4. CAGRARAY DPP 5. BATAN DPP 6. RAPU-RAPU DPP 7. MASBATE DPP 8. TICAO DPP 9. PB-105 10. PB-110	WASTE FUEL OIL	P 1.280
	WASTE LUBE OIL	P 0.630
SCHEDULE-2 MARINDUQUE-QUEZON-NO. LUZON AREA 1. BOAC DPP 2. PATNANUNGAN DPP 3. JOMALIG DPP 4. POLILIO DPP 5. TORRIJOS DPP 6. BASCO DPP 7. KABUGAO DPP 8. CASIGURAN DPP 9. SABTANG DPP 10. CALAYAN DPP 11. PALANAN DPP 12. ITBAYAT DPP 13. LUBUAGAN DPP 14. POWER BARGE - 120	WASTE FUEL OIL	P 1.310
	WASTE LUBE OIL	P 0.570
SCHEDULE-3 PALAWAN AREA 1. EL NIDO DPP 2. TAYTAY DPP 3. SAN VICENTE DPP 4. CULION DPP 5. LINAPACAN DPP 6. ARACELI DPP 7. BALABAC DPP 8. CAGAYANCILLO DPP 9. CUYO DPP 10. ROXAS DPP 11. BUSUANGA DPP 12. NARRA DPP 13. PUERTO PRINCESSA DPP 14. AGUTAYA DPP 15. BROOKE'S POINT DPP 16. POWER BARGE-106	WASTE FUEL OIL	P 1.280
	WASTE LUBE OIL	P 0.630
SCHEDULE-4 MINDORO-ROMBLON AREA 1. PULANG LUPA DPP 2. CALAPAN DPP 3. LUBANG DPP 4. MAMBURAO DPP 5. TINGLOY DPP 6. SAN JOSE DPP 7. CORCUERA DPP 8. CONCEPCION DPP 9. BANTON DPP 10. ROMBLON DPP 11. TABLAS DPP 12. SIBUYAN DPP 13. POWER BARGE-109 14. POWER BARGE-114	WASTE FUEL OIL	P 1.310
	WASTE LUBE OIL	P 0.580
SCHEDULE-5 EASTERN-VISAYAS AREA 1. CAMOTES DPP 2. TAGAPUL-AN DPP 3. MARIPIPI DPP 4. LIMASAWA DPP 5. ZUMARAGA DPP 6. ALMAGRO DPP 7. PILAR DPP 8. BIRI DPP 9. CAPUL DPP 10. DARAM DPP 11. SAN ANTONIO 12. SAN VICENTE 13. STO. NIÑO DPP	WASTE FUEL OIL	P 1.310
	WASTE LUBE OIL	P 0.580
SCHEDULE-6 WESTERN VISAYAS AREA 1. BANTAYAN DPP 2. SIQUIJOR DPP 3. CALUYA DPP 4. DOONG DPP 5. GIGANTES DPP 6. GUINTARCAN DPP 7. POWER BARGE-113 8. POWER BARGE-116	WASTE FUEL OIL	P 1.310
	WASTE LUBE OIL	P 0.650
SCHEDULE-7 EASTERN MINDANAO AREA 1. DINAGAT DPP 2. KALAMANSIG DPP 3. HIKDOP DPP 4. LORETO DPP 5. N. AQUINO DPP 6. JA SANTOS DPP 7. TALICUD DPP 8. BALUT DPP 9. POWER BARGE-111	WASTE FUEL OIL	P 1.280
	WASTE LUBE OIL	P 0.630
SCHEDULE-8 WESTERN MINDANAO AREA 1. JOLO DPP 2. BASILAN DPP 3. SIASI DPP 4. SIBUTU DPP 5. BALIMBING DPP 6. SITANGKAY DPP 7. TANDUBAS DPP 8. CAG. DE TAWI-TAWI DPP 9. MANUK-MANGKAW DPP 10. TAWI-TAWI DPP 11. SOUTH UBIAN DPP 12. TAPUL DPP 13. WEST SIMUNUL DPP 14. TONGKIL DPP 15. MAPUN DPP 16. MARUNGAS DPP 17. P.B.-108 18. P.B.-119	WASTE FUEL OIL	P 1.280
	WASTE LUBE OIL	P 0.630

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGER'S/ CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO PhP 80,000.00.
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN 2003 ORIGINAL (OR CERTIFIED XEROX COPY) FOR THE BIDDER OR AN AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT (ORIGINAL) OF THE COMPANY
3. VALID ACCREDITATION FROM EMB-DENR FOR TREATMENT/STORAGE/ DISPOSAL (TSD) FACILITY AND FOR THE WASTE TRANSPORTER, INCLUDING PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PERMIT TO TRANSPORT, WASTE MANIFEST FORM AND CERTIFICATE OF TREATMENT ALL ACKNOWLEDGED BY EMB-DENR.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding must present the original accreditations from EMB-DENR and may secure the official bid forms at P1,000.00/ set from Mr. Samuel V. Lomuntad, Jr. at Ground Floor, Building-1, NPC Head Office, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City or call telephone no. 924-5384. Deadline for issuance of bid forms is 4:30 p.m., **October 25, 2004.** Attendance to the Pre-Bid Conference on **October 25, 2004** at 2:00 p.m. is mandatory for all bidders.

For the Materials Management Department

(Sgd.) **FELIX B. TACATA, JR.**
OIC, MMD

(PDI - Oct. 6, 7 & 8, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date: September 29, 2004
Contract No.: BCMD.2004-007

1. The National Power Corporation (NPC) has applied a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of Electricity Market and Transmission Development Project. It is intended that part of the proceeds of the loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract for the Supply and Delivery of Revenue Metering Instrument Transformers and Test Equipment. Bidding is open to Bidders from eligible source countries of the Asian Development Bank.
2. The National Transmission Corporation (TransCo), administering the bidding of the above project, invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply and Delivery of Revenue Metering Instrument Transformers and Test Equipment for Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.
3. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding documents starting September 29, 2004 at the following address:

Office of the Manager
Bids and Contract Management Department
National Transmission Corporation
Ground Floor, Power Center
Quezon Avenue Corner BIR Road, Diliman,
Quezon City 1104, Philippines
Telephone Nos.: 981-2212, 981-2213
Telefax No.: 921-2308
Email Address: rvalejandro@transco.ph

4. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be purchased by interested eligible bidders or authorized representative upon submission of a letter of intent to the above address and upon payment of non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Philippine Pesos (PhP 10,000.00) or One Hundred Eighty US Dollars (US$ 180.00) per set.
5. International competitive bidding will be conducted in accordance with ADB's Single-Stage: Two-envelope procedure. Bidders are to submit two sealed envelopes simultaneously, one containing the Technical Proposal and the other the Price Proposal, enclosed together in an outer single envelope. Initially, only the Technical Proposals are opened at the date and time advised in the Bidding Document. The Price Proposals remain sealed and are held in custody by the Purchaser. The Technical Proposals are evaluated by the Purchaser. No amendments or changes to the Technical Proposals are permitted. The objective of the exercise is to allow the Purchaser to evaluate the Technical Proposals without reference to price. Bid of Bidders which do not conform to the specified requirements may be rejected as deficient Bids, with the approval of the ADB. Following ADB approval of the technical evaluation and at an address, date and time advised by the Purchaser, the Price Proposals are opened in the public. The Price Proposals are evaluated and following approval by the ADB of the price evaluation, the Contract is awarded to the Bidder whose Bid has been determined to be the lowest evaluated substantially responsive Bid.
6. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of Seventy Thousand (US$70,000.00) US Dollars or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency, and must be delivered to above office address on or before November 19, 2004. The bid security must be included with the technical proposals. Late Bids shall be rejected.

Pre-Bid Conference shall be on October 29, 2004 at the same venue.

7. The technical proposals will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
8. The price proposals and supplementary price proposals, if provided, will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the time and date and the address to be advised by the Employer after approval of the ADB of the evaluation of the technical proposals.

(Sgd.) **DOMINADOR S. GEONZON**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee &
Vice President, Project Management
National Transmission Corporation

(PDI - Sept. 30 & Oct. 6, 2004)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice Is Hereby Given That the Estate of the late Eulogio A. Maranan who died at Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada on April 13, 2003 Had been Settled by His Heirs In a deed of ExtraJudicial Partition with Sale.Subscribed and Acknowledged Before Atty. Magno V. Toribio, Notary Public For And In the City Of Trece Martinez per Doc.# 2; Page# 07; Book #XLI, Series of 2004.PDI-Sept.22.29 Oct.6,2004

PLAY - 12 Angry Men University of Asia & the Pacific Origas Oct. 5, 8, 9, 7:30PM Telengtan Hall. 0917-5337997 Ian

PLAY - 12 Angry Men University of Asia & the Pacific Origas Oct. 5, 8, 9, 7:30PM Telengtan Hall. 0917-5337997 Ian

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice Is Hereby Given That the Estate of the Late Rosario and Jesse Alibanggo Was Extrajudicially Settled Among thier Heirs as Per Doc 116 Page 24 Book VI Series 2004 Notary Public Atty. Wendell E. Coronel Of Pque on 20, Sept 2004. (PDI- Sept. 22,29,2004) (October. 6, 2004)

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Applicants are required to personally bring their resume, two (2) 2"x2" photos, transcript of records, and any valid ID. Interested parties may visit our office on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00am to 12noon at 1705 Cityland Herrera Tower, 90 Herrera cor. Valero Streets, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227 Philippines or call 813 6848

Supreme Court of the Philippines

COMMITTEE ON HALLS OF JUSTICE
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Supreme Court invites prospective bidders to submit their eligibility requirements and participate in the public bidding, to be conducted pursuant to Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, for the provision of JANITORIAL AND SECURITY SERVICES for the period 01 January to 31 December 2005, for the Halls of Justice at:

CLUSTER III

1. Angeles City, Pampanga
2. Balanga, Bataan
3. Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija
4. Camiling Tarlac
5. Capas, Tarlac
6. Dinalupihan, Bataan
7. Gerona, Tarlac
8. Iba, Zambales
9. Malolos, Bulacan
10. Morong Bataan
11. Olongapo City
12. Palayan City, Nueva Ecija
13. Paniqui, Tarlac
14. San Fernando, Pampanga
15. San Jose City, Nueva Ecija
16. San Jose del Monte, Bulacan
17. Sto. Domingo, Nueva Ecija
18. Tarlac City
19. Victoria, Tarlac

CLUSTER VI

1. Bacolod City
2. Bago City, Negros Occidental
3. Bais City, Negros Occidental
4. Banga, Aklan
5. Barotac Viejo, Iloilo
6. Binalbagan, Negros Occidental
7. Dumangas, Iloilo
8. Guimbal, Iloilo
9. Iloilo City
10. Janiuay, Iloilo
11. Kalibo, Aklan
12. La Carlota, Negros Occidental
13. Malinao, Aklan
14. Mambusao, Capiz
15. Pototan, Iloilo
16. Roxas City, Capiz
17. Sagay, Negros Occidental
18. San Carlos City, Negros Occidental
19. San Jose, Antique
20. Victorias City, Negros Occidental

CLUSTER IX

1. Aurora, Zamboanga del Sur
2. Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte
3. Ipil, Zamboanga del Sur
4. Isabela, Basilan
5. Jolo, Sulu
6. Labangan, Zamboanga del Sur
7. Molave, Zamboanga del Sur
8. Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur
9. San Miguel, Zamboanga del Sur
10. Sandangan, Zamboanga del Norte
11. Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte
12. Tambulig, Zamboanga del Norte
13. Zamboanga City

CLUSTER X

1. Balingasag, Misamis Oriental
2. Buenavista, Agusan del Norte
3. Butuan City, Agusan del Norte
4. Cagayan de Oro City
5. Dapa, Surigao del Norte
6. Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental
7. Initao, Misamis Oriental
8. Kinoguitan, Misamis Oriental
9. Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte
10. Loreto, Surigao del Norte
11. Mambajao, Camiguin
12. Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon
13. Medina, Misamis Oriental
14. Nasipit, Agusan del Norte
15. Oroquieta City, Misamis Occidental
16. Ozamis City, Misamis Occidental
17. Surigao City, Surigao del Norte
18. Tangub City, Misamis Occidental

CLUSTER XII

(Janitorial Services only)

1. Iligan City, Lanao del Norte
2. Kabacan, North Cotabato
3. Kidapawan, North Cotabato
4. Marawi City, Lanao del Sur

The approved budgets for the Clusters are as follows:

	Janitorial	Security
Cluster III	P 6,829,951.20	P 17,899,522.32
Cluster VI	4,651,020.36	11,329,781.76
Cluster IX	2,483,022.12	6,499,239.72
Cluster X	2,680,128.00	9,841,001.88
Cluster XII	1,031,140.56	– 0 –
TOTAL	P 17,675,262.24	P 45,569,545.68

This is to be charged against the budget released for the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses for the Halls of Justice, Supreme Court.

Janitorial and Security services shall be bid out separately. Those bidding for more than one cluster shall file separate bids for each cluster.

Eligibility requirements and the bid forms shall be made available during the Pre-Bid Conference. Said documents will be furnished the prospective bidders after payment of a non-refundable amount of P1000.00 for each Cluster and services they intend to bid for.

I. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference for both Janitorial and Security Services shall be on 14 October 2004, 9:00 a.m. at the Old Session Hall, Third Floor, Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Malate.

II. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS and OPENING OF BIDS

Submission of Eligibility Requirements and Bids for Janitorial Services shall be on 26 October 2004, Tuesday from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. at the Old Session Hall, Third Floor, Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila.

Submission of Eligibility Requirements and Bids for Security Services shall be on 27 October 2004, Wednesday, from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. also at the Old Session Hall of the Supreme Court.

Only the bids of eligible bidders will be opened in the presence of the bidders. The opening of bids shall be done right after the checking of the eligibility requirements.

The award shall be made not only on the basis of the bid price but also on the sufficiency of the supplies, equipment and administrative supervision to be provided.

The Supreme Court reserves the right to reject any or all bids or offers which it may consider to be disadvantageous and not beneficial to the Court or waive any defect or informality therein.

6 October 2004

(Sgd.) **DCA CHRISTOPHER O. LOCK**
Chairman, CHOJ-BAC

(PDI - October 6 & 13, 2004)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BID AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS (BSP) invites A&E Consultants to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the **Architectural and Engineering Design Consultancy Services** for the following proposed projects. The bid packages with the corresponding Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) are as follows:

Project Name	ABC
1.0 Proposed BSP Branch Building in Legazpi and Naga	P 9.12M
2.0 Proposed BSP Branch Building in Tuguegarao	P 5.75 M

The scope of work includes among others the preparation of plans, specifications and detailed estimates to include architectural, electrical, mechanical, structural, electronics and communication, plumbing/sanitary and landscaping works as specified in the Terms of Reference.

The minimum eligibility requirements are as follows:

1.0 The firm must have been in operation for the last fifteen (15) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this invitation).
2.0 The firm must have rendered within the last ten (10) years (reckoned from the date of the first advertisement/posting of this Invitation) A & E design consultancy services, at least three (3) completed new construction projects of similar nature like office buildings, banks, exchanges and financial institutions of similar magnitude as the proposed BSP projects and must be able to submit a certification of satisfactory performance for at least two (2) of the required three (3) projects.
3.0 The principal or Managing Officer must be a Registered Architect with at least twenty (20) years experience in architectural design and coordinating team efforts in A & E design.
4.0 The key personnel should be Registered Architect/s and Engineer/s with at least fifteen (15) years design experience.
5.0 The firm (partnership/corporation/joint venture) must be at least 60% owned by a Filipino citizen.
6.0 In case of a joint venture, a valid joint agreement. The joint venture must have rendered A & E design consultancy services for at least two (2) completed projects of similar magnitude as the proposed BSP project.

The quality-cost based evaluation procedure stipulated in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of RA No. 9184 shall be adpoted for this consultancy service requirement.

Eligibility documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat on 5 October until 12 October 2004 for a non-refundable fee of P200.00 at Room 204, 2nd Floor, Five Storey Building at the BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Streets, Manila and must be submitted duly accomplished to the same office not later than 4:30 p.m. on 18 October 2004.

The provisions of **Republic Act No. 9184** and its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract shall apply.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive defect or any formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any consultant/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obliged to compensate/indemnify the consultant for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) **MELPIN A. GONZAGA**
Vice-Chairman

(PDI - October 6 & 12, 2004)

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TEODORA MAGLALANG vda. de TETANGCO

of Apalit, Pampanga
(May 1, 1927 - October 4, 2004)

__IMA__ has finally come home to join __TATA__ and together, be in the loving embrace of our Heavenly Father. We take comfort in the knowledge that IMA now enjoys her eternal reward with her Creator in a place where peace reigns and where pain cannot touch her.

We will hold vigil for her at our family residence in San Juan, Apalit, Pampanga. She will be laid to her final resting place at the Apalit Catholic Cemetery on Saturday, 9 October 2004 after the 3:00 p.m. mass at the St. Peter the Apostle Parish Church.

Her bereaved children, Oscar and Nina, Boy, Mila, Pes and Toto, Say and Elma, Becs, Cyndi and Nicky, Lou and Ronil, and Rene, her grandchildren, sister, brothers and relatives request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Message of Thanks

We the family of the late

Pacita Yap Sioco

May 15, 1926 - September 22, 2004

Wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to all our relatives and friends for being with us during our time of greatest sorrow.

Thank you for all the prayers, flowers, mass cards, messages of love, concern, sympathy and generous donations.

All of these we shall cherish as we keep her in our hearts always.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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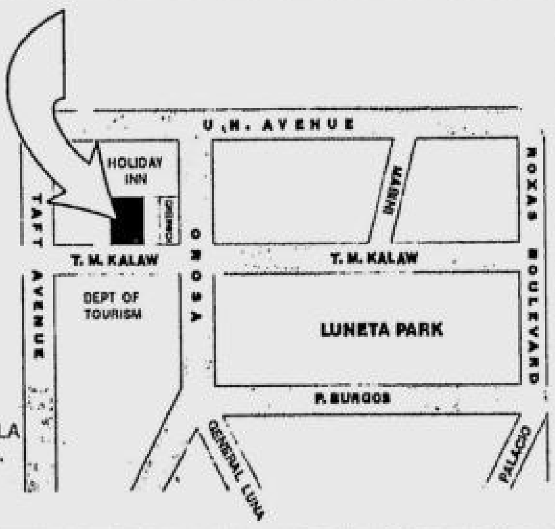

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Message of Thanks

For visiting us and being with us in our time of sorrows...
For praying with us and for us...
For the Mass cards and messages of sympathy and condolence...
For the beautiful flowers to express compassion...
For joining us in our nightly vigils...
For attending the Masses ...
For thinking of us in our hour of grief...
For all that you have done to console our hearts...

Our sincerest gratitude,

From children, **Jose Mario** and **Edita Cruz**, **Marilyn** and **Manuel Ibañez**, **Shirley Ann**, and **Hector** and **Teresita Fabros**, grandchildren **Hazel** and **Ben Pracht**, **Jay** and **Boogie Lagasca**, **Jem**, **Mark**, **Maureen** and **Ian Camaclang**, **Marsha**, **Donnie**, **Dax**, **Leslie**, **Chris**, and **Bryan** and great grandchildren **Jessica Pracht** and **Timmy Camaclang**.

DRA. ALICIA CAILIPAN BUÑAG M.D.

of Infanta, Quezon and Los Angeles, California

WIDOW OF DR. **PRIMO BUÑAG**
UP MEDICINE CLASS OF 1942
1ST WOMAN DOCTOR OF INFANTA,QUEZON

peacefully passed into the loving arms of the Lord last August 26, 2004
Please continue to remember her in your prayers.

EMMANUEL M. CELIS

Peacefully joined his Creator on September 29, 2004 at the age of 58.

His loving wife **Lumen**; children **Charmie**, **Mark**, **Jay** and **Justine**; his Parent **Josefina**, brothers and sisters **Riza**, **Willie**, **Cynthia** and **Jun**, and other relatives and friends request the pious readers for their prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at BF Almanza Parish Church, Las Piñas.

Necrological services will be held on Tuesday, October 5, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. BF Almanza Parish Church, Las Piñas City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, October 5, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. at Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat Parañaque.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

The Family of the late

COL. DANIEL CUTARAN LANTION, SR.

(Ret.) 0-2402 PC-(GSC)

wishes to express their heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who comforted and condoled them, offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and cards of Sympathy, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites and who in countless others ways helped them in their time of bereavement.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."

— 2 Corinthians 5:8

Memories

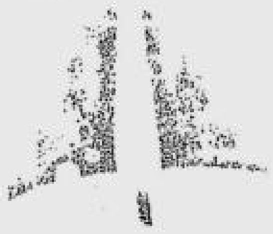
"Memory is a way of holding onto the persons you love, the person you are, the love ones you never want to lose."

The **INQUIRER NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS** brings forth – *Memories* – a tabloid-sized supplement to be published on **October 29, 2004** in time for the remembrance of our beloved loved ones.

This supplement will be dedicated to pre-need plans, funeral homes, memorial parks and other product/services related to death care. This endeavor will give you a chance to showcase your product lines and the attributes that your services offer.

Backed by the most read broadsheet in the land, this promises to be a most cost efficient and effective venture.

Should you have questions please contact Ms. Adela G. Mendoza, our Account Executive, at 912-9008 to 11 or e-mail us at agarcia@inquirer.com.ph.



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"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

— John 3:16

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Aries Espinosa

Portuguese film festival at The Podium

ONE OF the highlights of this year's Portuguese Festival in Manila is the very first Portuguese film festival in the country, which will be held at the Podium Cinema 2 on Oct. 14 and 15.

A must-see for film enthusiasts, it will feature critically acclaimed films from renowned Portuguese filmmakers including a series of award-winning films.

Opening the filmfest is Luis Filipo Rocha's "Camarate", a gripping suspense film about the crash of a plane carrying Portugal's Prime and Defense Minister during a presidential election in 1980. Investigations begin and conspiracy theories abound to this date on whether it was an accident or an assassination. Catch "Camarate" on Friday, Oct. 14 at 4 p.m.

Another Rocha film, "Adeus Pai", tells the story of Felipe, a lonely and introverted 12-year-old ignored by his father Manuel, and ambitious and successful technocrat. One day, Felipe's dream unexpectedly comes true. His father walks into his son's bedroom and tells him they are going to spend their holidays alone together in a magical and wondrous place in the Azores. "Adeus Pai", the 1997 Silvèr Prize winner in the International Children's Cinema Festival, will be shown on Thursday, Oct. 14 at 9 p.m.

"Mortinho por Chegar a Casa (Dying to Go Home)" is a fantasy fun drama that portrays a Portuguese immigrant in Amsterdam who is killed in an accident and wakes up in a cemetery-as a ghost. Realizing that the only way he can find peace is to have his bones buried in his native land, Santu leaves his hometown to seek help from his family. This collaboration between filmmakers Carlos da Silva and George Sluizer is multi-awarded: First Prize in the 1997 Film Festival of Holland; the Gold Name Award in the 1997 Film Festival of Holland; and the Silver Prize in the 1997 Fantasporo. It will be screened on Thursday, Oct. 14 at 1 p.m. and on Friday, Oct. 15 at 7 p.m.

Fernando Vedrell's "O Gotejar da Luz (Light Drops)" is a film showing Africa, its nature, beauty, and culture during European colonization times. A love triangle will cause the murder of two. It also portrays the friendship between a 14-year-old boy, Rui Pedro, son of Portuguese parents, and an African named Jacopo, who eventually becomes his African father and teaches him to respect nature and African culture. This will be screened on Friday, Oct. 15 at 9 p.m.

In "Pesadelo Cor de Rosa (Sweet Nightmare)" by Fernando Fragata, Daniel, a young British engineer posted in Lisbon, meets Carolina, his so-called dream girl, on one of his trips to Southern Portugal. Little does he realize that she is fresh out of prison and is about to turn his life into a nightmare. Catch this romantic comedy on Thursday, Oct. 14 at 8 p.m. and on Friday, Oct. 15 at 1 p.m.

The film festival will also feature a series of Portuguese short films including Isabel Rosa's "A Menina dos Meus Olbes (The Apple of My Eyes)", Joao Fonseca's "Dè Alguidar ate ao Mar (Towards the Sea)", Pero Baptista's "O Biejo (The Kiss)", and Racquel Jancinto Nunes' "Hora de Almoco (Lunch Break)". The Portuguese short film series will be screened on Thursday, Oct. 14 at 4 p.m.

The First Portuguese Film Festival will be held at The Podium Cinema 2 Fifth Level and is free of admission. It is spearheaded by the Embassy of Portugal, Icam, the Instituto Camones in cooperation with The Podium and Smart Communications.

A SCENE from Luis Filipe Rocha's 'Adeus Pai (Goodbye Father)'.

Campos new PRSP president

THE NEW board of directors of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP), who were elected by virtue of an order from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), has chosen Jones Campos, public relations head of Globe Telecom, as the new PRSP president.

Also elected were Joel Lacsamana, director of corporate communications, Manila Water, internal vice president, Dante Velasco, CEO of Creative Point, external vice president, Lourdes de Guzman, first VP and corporate PR head, College Assurance Plan, secretary, Angelito Doble, senior AVP, PNB, treasurer, Dulce Festin Baybay, public relations head, ABS-CBN Foundation, internal auditor, and Maloli Manalastas, VP corporate affairs, ABS-CBN, director (PR officer).

The other members of the board are Rocky Dimaculangan, media relations manager, Ayala Land, and Rochelle Hilario, corporate communications manager, Asian Terminals.

The elections were held under the auspices of an SEC-authorized convenors group composed of 10 past PRSP presidents headed by PR consultant Max Edralin Jr and an election committee chaired by Charlie Agatep, CEO of Agatep Associates and composed of Virgilio Pantaleon, PR counselor of the Yuchengco Group of Companies, and Leonides Valencia, a retired PR executive and former president of Manila Standard.

Following the failure of the holdover president Winston Marbella to call for an election, the SEC intervened and was represented at the polls by lawyer Kenneth Joy Quimio of the SEC general counsel office.

The elections were attended by the biggest voter turnout in PRSP history.

JONES Campos

The officers were recently inducted by Sen. Alfredo Lim.

SEX-HDL, Syndrome X: a family affair

THE FAMILY must be the primary unit that can institute healthy lifestyle habits to overcome SEX-HDL.

SEX-HDL is the acronym given by Ramon Abarquez, professor emeritus of the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, to the known cardiovascular risk factors of smoking, exercise lack, hypertension, diabetes and lipids or cholesterol. He stresses that healthy lifestyle changes should be considered as the pillars in the treatment of obesity and other risk factors; and parents should set the example so these healthy habits are inculcated in their children.

Health experts are alarmed at the increasing prevalence of obesity combined with other risk factors including diabetes, high blood pressure, low high-density lipoprotein (good cholesterol) and high triglycerides, which is another form of fats. This clustering of risk factors has been dubbed as Syndrome X, which has been shown to increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes and other cardiovascular complications by as much as four-fold.

The risk factors are inter-related. Excess weight and obesity are major risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes. Obese individuals are also predisposed to develop hypertension and cholesterol problems.

It has also been hypothesized by several researchers that insulin resistance unifies the clustering of risk factors that mark the progression of Syndrome X. Abarquez explains that insulin resistance is aggravated even more by obesity and physical inactivity. Those who are insulin resistant have an imbalance in their blood lipids (blood fat), increased level of triglycerides, and a decreased level of HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol), markers that are similar to those of Syndrome X.

In a research conducted by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, results showed that 22 percent of adults between the ages of 20 and 79 have at least three of the symptoms of Syndrome X. Locally, it is estimated that one out of five adult Filipinos suffers from Syndrome X.

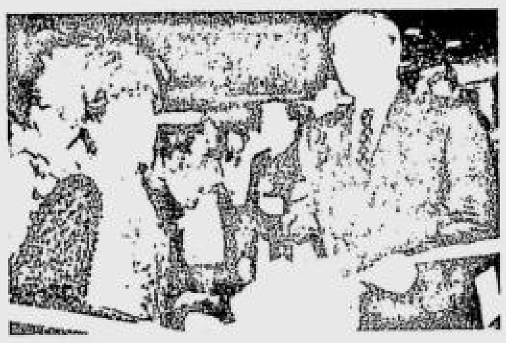
For most patients, Syndrome X is usually caused by improper nutrition, inactivity or inadequate physical activity, and an increase in body weight. It is also often seen in people who are obese than in those who have normal body weight.

Most of the symptoms of the syndrome can be treated with medications. However, most physicians recommend regular exercise, proper diet and losing weight as the initial therapeutic strategy for preventing Syndrome X. When these lifestyle changes are no longer effective, a drug is prescribed to help patients manage Syndrome X.

Orlistat is the only available fat blocker medication that works locally in the gut to prevent dietary fat absorption. There are clinical studies to prove that it blocks 30 percent of the dietary fat intake, and could lower the seven parameters in patients with Syndrome X: waist circumference, cholesterol, triglycerides, blood sugar, weight, LDL/HDL ratio, and blood pressure.

Primarily indicated for weight management, orlistat has recently been approved by the European Commission as a medication that can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes. Orlistat, which is a prescription drug and should only be bought upon a doctor's advice, is now also indicated for the prevention and treatment of Syndrome X.

WATSONS OPENS 104TH STORE IN BONIFACIO GLOBAL CITY
Watsons Philippines, Asia's largest drug store, health and beauty retailer recently opened its 104th branch at the 2nd level of Market! Market, Bonifacio, Global City. The 450-sqm outlet manifests visibility, accessibility and shopping convenience and is one of the biggest Watsons stores to date. Customers residing or working near the area can choose from a wide selection of products from prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, to toiletries, cosmetics, novelty items, candies and snacks. To celebrate its three years in the country, Watsons has raffled off two roundtrip tickets to Los Angeles plus pocket money this September. Watsons is targeting to set up 25 additional outlets before the year ends. Opening day activities included mascot appearances, free product samples, clinic consultation and blood pressure monitoring. Special guests included Tessie S. Coson, president of SM Inc, sports celebrities Vince Hizon, Richie Ticzon and Cris Bolado of the San Miguel All-Stars basketball team and TV/movie personality Rica Peralejo who recently launched her own line of beauty products now available at Watsons. Shown at the opening were (from left) Grace Rivera, merchandise director, Watsons Philippines; TV/movie personality Rica Peralejo; Coson; Philip Uy, EVP, Lebecarre International; Eileen de Guzman, Watsons Philippines operations controller and Aura Floria, finance controller, Watsons Philippines.



TESSA AT GAUDI RESTAURANT OPENING
Fashion icon and Inquirer Lifestyle columnist Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Spanish Ambassador Ignacio Sagaz were the guests of honor in the recent opening of the new and better site of Gaudi Spanish Restaurant at the 4th level of Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati. Named after the late noted Barcelona-based avant-garde artist Antonio Gaudi, the restaurant offers traditional Spanish cuisine cooked in a contemporary and creative manner.

uality Circle Practi

INTEL WINS 12 AWARDS
Intel Technology Philippines Inc, the local subsidiary of Intel Corp, the world's largest chipmaker, reaped 12 awards at the recently concluded 24th Quality Circles Regional Convention sponsored by the Quality Circles Practitioners Association Inc. (QCPA)-Picap Luzon chapter, a national organization composed of people from government, the academe, and industry sectors, that promote quality circles philosophy and processes nationwide, sponsored the event. Intel Philippines went home with 2 Gold awards and 10 Silver awards, further exemplifying the site's Tatak Kagalingan core values of teamwork, quality, productivity and creativity, and the Filipino workforce's overall operational excellence and global competitiveness. Shown is Intel Philippines' team Eric Sim, CEP factory manager, Quey Arellano, CEP manufacturing manager and Joylan Nadal, site TPM manager, receiving the awards.

Bits Clips

Comddap free ride

THE BIGGEST computer industry show Comddap Expo Manila 2004 set from Oct. 7 to 9 is expected to draw bigger crowds as organizers introduce expanded exhibit space, new products and services, promotional discounts, and activities. More than 30,000 visitors regularly attend the annual event. Leading industry players comprise the Computer Manufacturers, Distributors, and Dealers Association of the Philippines (Comddap). This year's Expo Manila edition will feature the latest IT products, services, and innovations including those developed locally. Free transport service to The NBC Tent begins daily at 10 a.m. on day 1. Shuttle service leaves every 30 minutes at the Ayala Center parking lot near Park Square 1 until 6:30 p.m. Return trips from the NBC Tent terminal also starts at 10 a.m. at similar 30-minute intervals and ends at 7:30 p.m. For details, call Comddap's Gina Dimayuga at 750-9456.

'Flavors of Spain 2'

FUEGO Hotels, together with the Economic and Commercial Office of the Spanish Embassy, brings the "Flavors of Spain 2", a Spanish food festival to be held in all Fuego-managed properties, namely Taal Vista Hotel in Tagaytay, Pearl Farm Beach Resort in Davao and Club Punta Fuego in Batangas. Master chef Mikel Arrviz from Spain's Basque region will be flown in especially for the event. "Flavors of Spain 2" will first be held from Oct. 16 to 31 at the Taal Vista Hotel, then at Pearl Farm from Nov. 13 to 30, and on Nov. 19 it will be launched at Club Punta Fuego, where it runs until Nov. 30. Last stop will be at Terrazas de Punta Fuego from Dec. 10 to 17. To kick off the food fest, an exhibit of Spanish products followed by cocktail buffet will be held at the Tower Club on Oct. 7. For inquiries, call 750-1999, 751-3088/89 or 750-1896/98.

HealthGuide fair

AFTER 10 years of guiding families to better health and better life, HealthGuide holds a health fair from Oct. 8 to 10 with the theme "A Decade of Good Health" to be held at the lobby of Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati. Be in the pink of health before the Christmas rush and avail yourselves of the free medical services, such as bone scanning and blood pressure monitoring. A wide range of health products from food sampling to vitamins and supplements will be offered for the whole family. Sponsors are Anlene, C-Lium, Fres-C, PAL Sweet, Nizoral Cream, Antiox, Visine, Mylanta, Nestle's zero fat dessert, Agre Calvit, Bonalet Cee, Decolgen, Ceelin, Disudrin, Blue Cross, Solvay Pharma, and Kumon Philippines. HealthGuide is the sister publication of HealthToday and MOMS&Babies. For more details call 886-0333 loc 113 or 115.

RP exports up 13.7% in August to $3.4B

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CHINA is poised to become the Philippines' third-largest export market as receipts rose 13.7 percent in August to $3.4 billion, from $3 billion in the same month last year.

Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said in a statement that the growth rate in August was the second-highest recorded this year, after May's 15.3 percent.

At the same time, month-to-month exports increased 10 percent in August from $3.1 billion in July, bringing export receipts for the first eight months to $25.25 billion.

China's increasing appetite for local goods made it the 5th biggest buyer of Philippine products in August, from 8th place in January.

"China will continue to be one of the top export markets of the country," Purisima said. "If this trend continues, China will become one of the country's top three export destinations after US and Japan."

Based on the August figures, Purisima said he was confident the country would post a double-digit export growth for 2004.

"For this year, we expect our export growth to be at between 10 percent and 11 percent," he said. "We have faith in the capability of our exporters and in the marketability of our products."

Electronics, making up 65.9 percent of the total export shipment, registered $2.25 billion or a 15.7-percent increase from $1.95 billion made in August last year.

Garments, which made up 6.7 percent of total exports, yielded $229.5 million or 11.6 percent higher than $205.7 million.

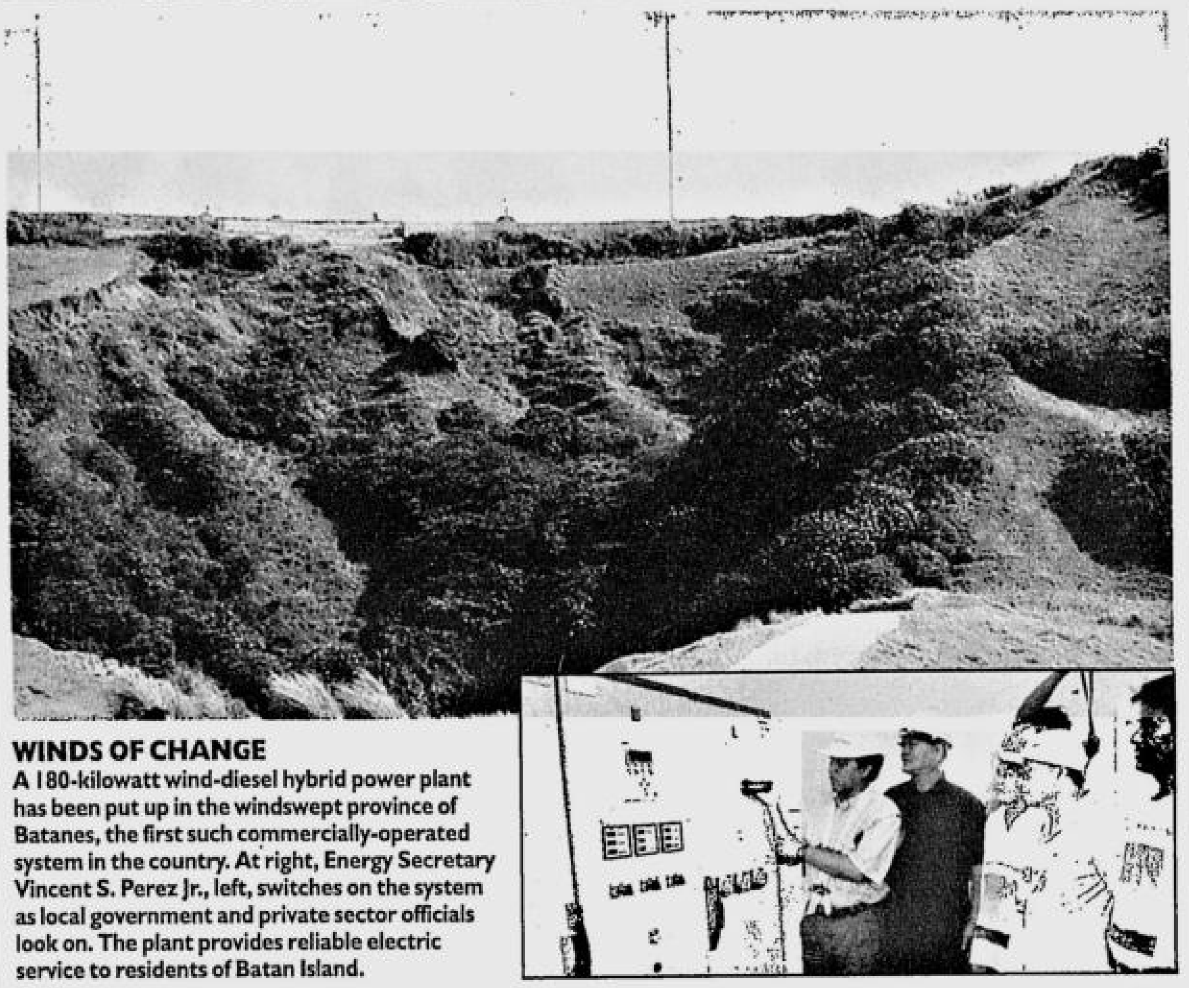
"Our electronic and garments products would continue to pace the growth of our export sales," Purisima said. "But we have increased our efforts to develop other market groups so that the country would not have to rely on these two."

Manufactured goods made up about 90 percent of all exports in August and grew 16.2 percent to $3.1 billion from $2.6 billion in the same period in 2003.

Income from agriculture-based products turned in $156 million or 4.6 percent of total earnings.

Other top exports were woodcraft and furniture, $36.3 million; metal components, $32.4 million; cathodes and section of cathodes (refined copper) $30.3 million; and fresh bananas $21.9 million.

The United States remained the country's biggest market, absorbing $847.9 million worth of exports, followed by Japan with $6679 million and Singapore at $260 million.



WINDS OF CHANGE
A 180-kilowatt wind-diesel hybrid power plant has been put up in the windswept province of Batanes, the first such commercially-operated system in the country. At right, Energy Secretary Vincent S. Perez Jr., left, switches on the system as local government and private sector officials look on. The plant provides reliable electric service to residents of Batan Island.

Int'l credit agencies warn of RP ratings downgrade

INTERNATIONAL credit rating agencies had warned the government that the country's rating could be downgraded if no new tax measures were passed in Congress, according to Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima.

Purisima yesterday told the delegates to the 30th Philippine Business Conference at the Manila Hotel that this was the message from representatives of Fitch Ratings, Moody's Investors Service, and Standard and Poor's Ratings Services.

Purisima joined a government mission that made the rounds of international capital markets in New York, London, Singapore and Hong Kong.

"They (ratings agencies) told us that if there were no new tax (measures), the Philippines would suffer a downgrade which (could) result in the drying up of financial support from international markets," Purisima said.

Malacañang has lined up several proposed tax measures to raise some P80 billion a year for the next six years.

Latest data showed that Moody's gave the country a rating of "Ba2," while Fitch and Standard and Poor's both submitted a "BB" rating.

Moody's "Ba" rating means that an investment would "have speculative elements" since repayment of the debt is not considered well assured.

The agency affixes to the rating the numbers 1 to 3, with one being the high end and 3 the lowest.

Similarly, Fitch's and Standard and Poor's ratings meant that the country was investment grade. This means that investments made are speculative, with the possibility of credit risks.

Only last July, Standard and Poor's also downgraded the peso's rating from "BBB" to "BBB-."

The agency cited potential risks of large government debts, coupled with a "shallow capital market."

Ronnel W. Domingo

DOF warns of perilous snags in SSS-GSIS merger

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance said that while the proposed merger of the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System would be ideal for the country's social security sector, the government must not rush into this undertaking until the problems hounding each of the state pension funds have been resolved.

The DOF said that both the SSS and the GSIS should first iron out their actuarial and political problems before they talk of merging.

"Merging the two may be a good idea, but political will is needed to pursue that because, for now, the government has more pressing problems to address," Finance Undersecretary Jeremias Paul said in an interview. "Transition is needed before they can be merged."

According to Paul, one of the issues the government needs to address before it can even consider merging the pension funds is the harmonization of the benefits and contribution structure of the SSS and the GSIS.

He said there could be difficulty in harmonizing the structure of the two pension funds because their policies concerning contributions and payment of benefits vary greatly.

The GSIS, which services state employees, requires higher contributions from its members than what the SSS requires from its own. Contribution by an SSS member is only set at 9.5 percent of his or her salary credits, while a GSIS member's contribution is set at 21 percent.

Also, the SSS is facing a more immediate funding problem than the GSIS. Data from its annual report showed that SSS would be forced to use its reserves by 2008 and that its funds would be depleted by 2015 if premium payments would not be raised. The GSIS, on the other hand, claimed that its fund would last for another 30 to 35 years without an increase in contributions.

Paul cited the World Bank studies on the feasibility of merging the SSS and the GSIS conducted in the 1990s. While the World Bank initially recommended a merger, it later on backtracked, saying that each of the pension funds has to be stable before a merger becomes ideal.

Michelle V. Remo

Palace sets up unit to see finance needs of LGUs

By Michelle V. Remo

MALACAÑANG has issued an executive order creating a state-owned corporate entity that will service the financing needs of local government units, a move aimed at relieving the cash-strapped government from the burden of providing budgetary support to LGUs.

Under Executive Order No. 252, the Municipal Finance Corp. (MFC) shall provide loan facilities to LGUs, especially low-income earning ones.

The MFC would replace the Municipal Development Fund Office, which used to operate under the Department of Finance, and would function more as a provider of loans, instead of grants, to LGUs.

The unit would also serve as an affiliate corporation of the Land Bank of the Philippines, while its seed money would come from the national government.

The move to create the MFC followed calls from the departments of finance and budget for LGUs to lessen their dependence on the national government amid the prevailing fiscal woes. LGUs are urged to generate funds on their own, such as through bond issuance and increasing the rates of local taxes, to fully shoulder expenses for projects and programs that are local in nature.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin during the Senate hearing on the proposed 2005 national budget last week said that the national government intended to fully implement the devolution of expenditure for local programs and projects to LGUs, as stated under the Local Government Code.

But some LGUs still depend heavily on the national government for the funding of their basic services.

In a presentation to the Senate, Boncodin said that except from the internal revenue allotment (IRA), the MFC would be the only conduit for funds needed by LGUs. This way, the national government would be spared from having to shell out money from its coffers to rescue LGUs in need of financing.

The move to reduce dependence of LGUs on the national government is part of the government's belt-tightening measure to close down the gaping budget deficit and ballooning debt, which if left unsolved, would spell out a full-blown fiscal crisis for the country.

Not feeling well? Go to RP, PMAP tells ailing foreigners

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Instead of preventing nurses and health workers from seeking work abroad, the government should instead try to attract people in need of medical attention into the country, officials of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines said.

This market has been successfully mined by alternative medicine practitioners, particularly the controversial faith healers, between 1978 and 1995, the PMAP said.

But now the country should sell itself as a destination for mainstream medical tourism as it boasts some of the best medical specialists in the world, said PMAP managing director Gerry Plana.

Both the government and United Nations statistics place some 250,000 Filipino nurses working abroad.

Baguio-based universities have noted a consistently high enrollment numbers in their nursing courses. Based on the latest survey, many schools have noted a trend for enrolling middle-aged professionals, some of whom are retiring government officials seeking nursing jobs abroad.

Oscar Contreras, PMAP president and Ayala Corp. managing director, said restricting migrant work for medical professionals may not be feasible.

He said the three-year mandatory requirement for licensed doctors and nurses to practice in the provinces is already a reasonable prerequisite for overseas work.

Plana said migrant work was one of the many options open to Filipino workers in a globalized economy.

Tourism officials said a variant of the PMAP proposal had been introduced before as a health care project.

During a visit to Baguio last year, President Macapagal-Arroyo proposed the creation of retirement villages that would appeal to American, European and Japanese citizens seeking to migrate to pristine, tropical retirement destinations.

The Department of Tourism has yet to receive executive directives to pursue the concept, however.

Contreras said Ms Arroyo's job-generating projects were "in the right direction" but he noted she has so far been unable to provide mechanisms to make these work.

"We're here to provide those details," he said.

PMAP will be presenting to the President a national human resource agenda during its 41st annual conference here as a guidepost for generating between six million and 10 million new jobs before 2010.

It includes, among other things, a proposal for correcting the gap between the labor force and actual employment opportunities in the country, Contreras said.

He said that part of the labor imbalance is caused by the education-system's fixation on training employees, This accounted for the high rate of professionals migrating abroad to seek employment, he said.

Contreras said the country's labor pool has started to reflect the erosion of the quality of the education system.

Out of 100 applicants at call centers nationwide, only three make the grade, he said. Most applicants fail the call center industry's high English literacy requirement.

He said 40 percent of applicants to the country's top corporate firms drew poor results in the mandatory IQ examinations.

And yet this same labor pool has been a sufficient source for overseas work, he noted.

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DUNKIN' DONUTS
Classics
20

Jasmania in Manila

The Fil-Am idol arrives in Manila today

Text and photos by Tim Yap

SINGAPORE—Jasmine Trias is up for a big surprise. This will be the first time she is setting foot on Philippine soil, the land of her parents. And the 17-year-old Fil-Am chick who grew up in Hawaii doesn't know what to expect.

She is here in the Lion City as part of the last leg of the 50-city tour of "American Idol" (with Singapore as the last and only leg outside the US), along with fellow contestants Jon Peter Lewis, George Huff, Fantasia Barrino, Diana De Garmo, La Toya London and Jennifer Hudson.

At the Hotel Inter-Continental Singapore, Jasmine took the time out to chill and chitchat with this writer about her life before and after "Idol," her fondness for Filipino food and who she wants to meet when she gets to Manila.

I told her about her superstar status in the Philippines—how her commercials and billboards and print ads are all over town—and she couldn't believe it!

She speaks in a very humble tone, smiles a lot, with the occasional girly giggle that makes her even more endearing. From the minute the world saw her as the Hawaiian girl with a flower on her ear, Jasmine has been riding on a wave, experiencing a whirlwind of things. For young Filipinos who witnessed her evolution in the show, she was more than that.

Without Jasmine knowing it, she has become an idol for young Filipinos who are searching for their place in the sun. At a time when pop culture idols reek of dirt and intrigue, she exudes the distinct wholesome charm and refreshing confidence of a girl out to sing her way into everyone's heart. Not since Sharon Cuneta has there been anyone who has had that effect.

Now they all want to be like Jasmine—the girl who did well.

JASMANIA/C2

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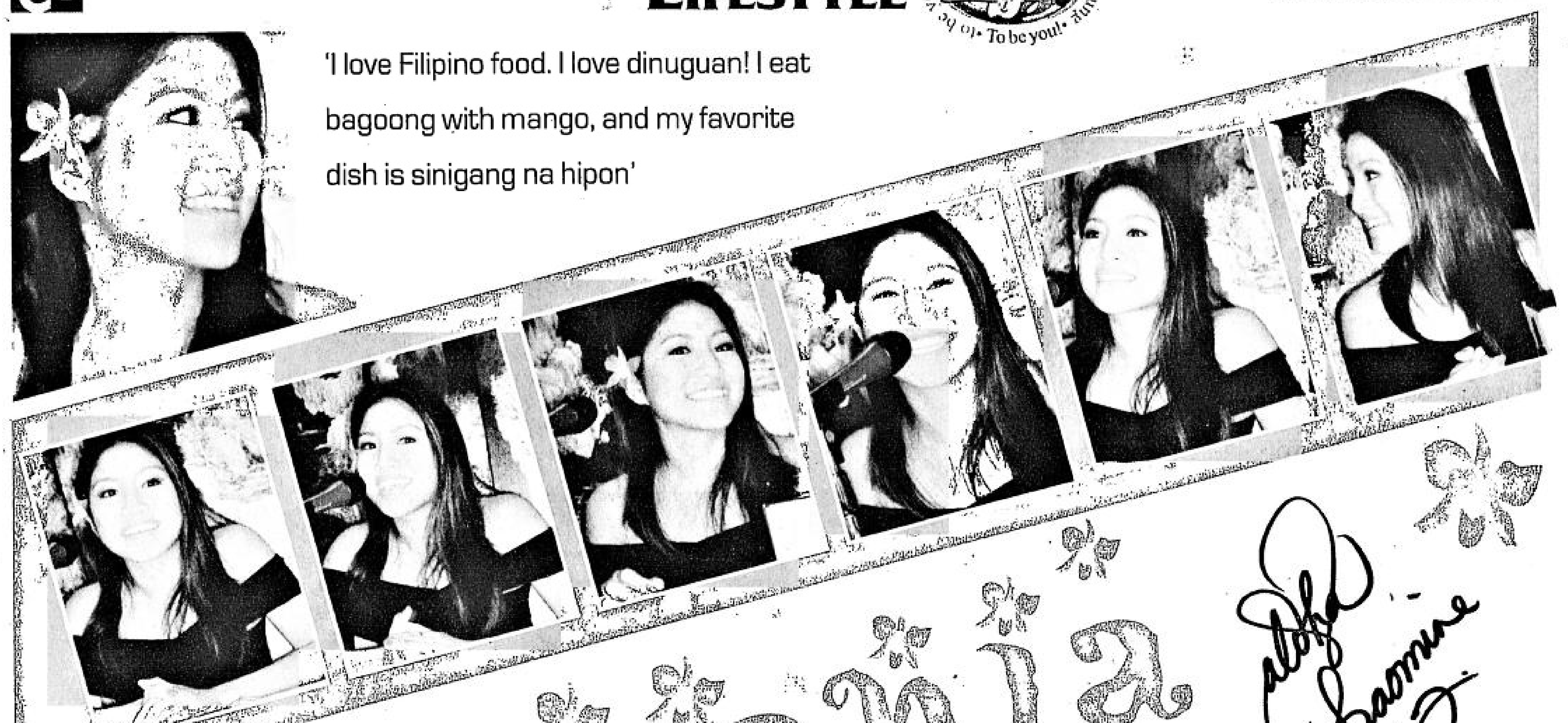
'I love Filipino food. I love dinuguan! I eat bagoong with mango, and my favorite dish is sinigang na hipon'



Jasmania in Manila

aloha Jasmine

From page C1

So just like in Hawaii where both the governor and the mayor declared a "Jasmine Trias Day" after her honor (the day she arrived, that is)—with the powers vested upon me, I therefore declare today, Oct. 6, 2004, as Jasmine Trias Day.

So how is life after "American Idol"?

Life is... great! It's a lot of hard work—I had all these things in the Philippines, all these endorsements that I had to do while on tour. It was pretty hectic. But it's a lot of fun. I like work because it keeps me up there. It keeps my dream alive—life has been really great.

Do you know the scope of your endorsements—do you know how extensive they are? What are your expectations coming to the Philippines for the first time?

I haven't been to the Philippines at all. I don't really know what the people are like there—except for my family in Hawaii and the mainland, and that's it. So I don't know how it's gonna be. But I'm very excited.

You were singing and speaking Filipino in your latest commercials. You sang the "Love Ko 'To" McDonald's jingle, "Kailangan Ko'y Ikaw" in Smart, and you speak Filipino in your Bench commercial. It's all over television.

Oh my God—really?! See, I don't even know these things! I can speak—(makes a little effort, and with a hint of American twang, says)—"*pwede akong magsalita, konti lang,*" but (laughs) I can understand pretty well.

So how Filipino are you?

I love Filipino food. I love *dinuguan*—I eat *dinuguan*! And I eat *bagoong* with mango, and my favorite dish is *sinigang na hipon*. My mom cooks it for us—she's a great cook. She cooks all these Filipino food for me, and I think that's a big part of it. I was around my mom a lot, and she was raised very traditionally, so she taught me the culture and how it was growing up Filipino.

Immediately when you and Camile Velasco got into the top 12 in "American Idol," it was front page in the papers. Do you realize how big that was?

It blows my mind! It's beyond my imagination. I have no knowledge of the country, except for my culture and who I am.

What are your plans now that you are coming to the Philippines for the first time?

I wanna shop! I've heard there are great malls there. I heard the fashion there is great—and I love fashion, you know, buying a lot of different stuff, and so I'm pretty excited about that. But we'll see if we have time for that, coz its not on my schedule. But I'm gonna try to do everything in the less-than-two weeks that I will be in Manila.

Everyone wants a piece of Jasmine Trias!

My schedule is pretty busy—exactly! Three days for McDonald's, three days for Smart, three days for Bench. And then I have to make appearances in MTV, "ASAP," "Rated K," and you know, all that other stuff. I don't even know the others.

How about an album?

An album? I don't know when it's coming out yet, we haven't started working on it. But I am aiming for a pop-soul direction. 'Coz I feel that I have a very deep tone in my voice and I think it's more "soul-y" not "pop-ish," like Britney Spears. It's more like Alicia Keys, Christina Aguilera, with a deep tone—and I think I can pull it off.

This Saturday, Alicia Keys has a concert in Manila.

I wanna go there! I think I have tickets. I think I have access passes. She's my favorite. I love Alicia Keys, I love her.

How was your experience in the competition?

A lot of pressure. Very intense. A wholly different game for me. I'd entered a lot of competitions before in Hawaii but you sing in front of only 20 people.

But this was in front of the whole nation, and as I found out, of the world. So that was a lot of pressure, plus Hawaii was supporting me, like, 100 percent, and so I had the pressure of—oh my God!

And there was a Jasmine Day, I heard. What date was that?

There are actually two Jasmine Days. I think it's the day I arrived back (in Hawaii). I think it was like May something—I don't even know. But the two days that I was there—one day was a Jasmine Trias Day from the governor, and one was from the mayor. It's pretty cool.

That alone is a legacy for your future kids and the next generation. So when you're a *lola* already, you and your whole clan can celebrate Jasmine Trias day!

It is such an honor, I have been so blessed. (Smiles)

Talking about fashion—the orchid, is that part of your own styling?

My flower? Yes, in Hawaii actually, it's part of Hawaiian culture to wear flowers on the ear. I was representing Hawaii and I'm the Hawaiian girl—so you know, that's why I had it. It really wasn't a fashion thing, but it became a fashion thing because of the show.

But you took it off?

I took it off because I wanted people to see me without the flower. I think everybody in the show grew as a person, physically, mentally and vocally. And so everybody had their own image. Everybody started creating their own image. And I had the flower for the first half, and then all of a sudden I grew to be... Jasmine Trias! Not the Hawaiian girl from Hawaii. I'm still from Hawaii, but now I want people to know me as Jasmine Trias.

'I was around my mom a lot. She was raised very traditionally, so she taught me the culture and how it was growing up Filipino'

So you saw Filipina girls wearing the flower.

I saw them wearing the big ones! I saw them wearing the sunflower on their hair! (Smiles) That was so funny! It was called "Jasmania!" It was on "ASAP," and I was watching TFC back home. My mom would always watch and cry while watching soap operas, like "Maalaala Mo Kaya..." And I saw a little clip of Vina Morales singing with a big flower on her ear. That was really cute!

Who do you want to meet when you get to Manila?

Regine Velasquez. I think she's a great singer.

You guys should sing together.

That would really be awesome. And Vina Morales, I think she's really awesome. Pops Fernandez, Martin Nievera... Before, a lot of people were telling me that I look like Jolina (Magdangal). She's cool. I wanna meet everybody that I possibly can.

When you shot your Smart commercial, did you understand the song?

Yup, it means I need you, I need you here, in my life. "*Kailangan ko'y ikaw, dito sa buhay ko*"—I understand pretty well. I saw it, and I was like—"That's me?!" (Wide-eyed)

When I was shooting it, I felt like such a star—because the camera was in front of me, I had a clean screen behind me, the fan was blowing in my face, I was just singing, and I was like—wow! I really felt like a superstar!

Because you are a superstar!

It really hasn't hit me yet. It's still surreal for me because even if I've been doing it for so long and I've had so many things going on, it still feels like...

As for a career in the Philippines, I'm sure you will be bombarded with movie, record and TV deals. How will you handle all these now that you are starting a US career?

I wanna do it all. I wanna do it. Let's see how it works out. Filipinos are a very loyal audience. In the US, once you're gone, you're gone. I'm gonna be working on my album in LA, and distribute it there and in the Philippines. Hopefully it's gonna be everywhere! I wanna be out there as long as I possibly can because this career is what I really want, it's what I've been dreaming about all my life.

And 10 years from now, I hope to be doing the same thing!

JASMINE with the author

WHILE in town, the Pinay idol will be busy with commercial shoots and TV apperances.

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Products for a flawless pre-makeup face

Vanity Fare

Lora Gabol

I CAN spot a good makeup artist in two seconds, a bad makeup artist in one. I just take one peek at their makeup base collection: a one-foundation-shade-fits-all-skin-tones technique instantly turns me off.

Same goes for those who think that cake foundation is the only option as far as creating a flawless canvas for color is concerned. Word to these "makeup artists": Throw away that decade-old compact already and save women from all over from looking like *siopaos* in photos!

The art of the makeup base is tricky, and I think I know why very few people take time and effort to perfect it. A face is, after all, still "bare" after foundation is applied, and makeup is supposed to be about color. What most people don't realize is how an imperfect base can significantly rob those blues, greens, pinks and reds of their impact.

It's time to learn the 'base-ics,' and here are my top picks. These prods are all you'll ever need for a flawless pre-makeup face—or at least the illusion of one.

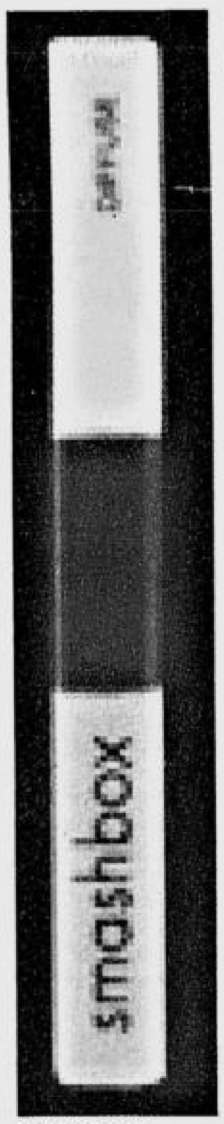
Consider this your line-up: Foundation primer, foundation, concealer and powder. Depending on your skin type and the clarity of your complexion, your kit may require just one or all of these. Study your bare complexion and use what you need. Because while a good base must be worked on, no one wants to see layers of products where they shouldn't be.

Prime picks

Use primers if you tend to turn greasy—there are formulas with oil-control properties. Most primers have great skincare benefits, too, so make the most of the winners available in the market today.

Shu Uemura UV Underbase. There are days when this is all I need after my skincare regimen. This cooling mousse gives my face an extra toning and leaves it feeling fresh and smooth. It doesn't leave you looking harshly matte. You'll love the dewy finish that goes perfectly well with just a hint of cheek stain and gloss. This is your best bet when you want something more polished than just tinted moisturizer.

Maybelline UV White Base. A really, really light facial lotion that almost feels like moisturizer. While it doesn't give much coverage on its own, it does a pretty good job of making regular foundation work better—the results are always smoother and more flawless when this is used in synergy with either liquid or powder foundations. It has SPF, and the skincare benefits give all skin types a great boost.



SMASHBOX Diffusion Wand

Concealer cheat sheet

Ah, everyone's favorite product! If your skin doesn't turn schizo (read: makes any kind of makeup slide off it in the middle of the day), you can live on concealer. This is a definite godsend for those with less-than-perfect eye areas (read: me).

Shiseido The Makeup Duo Concealer Compact. I will not—and I repeat—**not** allow myself to attend an event where cameras will be clicking left and right without even a smidgen of this product on my face. This is the most photogenic concealer I've ever come across, as it seems to adjust to any kind of lighting. Put me in white, yellow, red, green, blue and rainbow-colored lighting, and I will gladly flash you a picture-perfect smile—just because I know that if a snapshot was indeed being taken, I wouldn't have to worry about concealer spots appearing on my face. The two shades in all compacts can be mixed-and-matched to your exact skin color, so don't worry about having to change concealers when you're tan or paler than usual.

Smashbox Diffusion Wand. Let's stay on the topic of photogenic products. If you have bad undereye circles, you are one of three things: Uncle Fester's distant relative, an insomniac, or Lora Gahol. And when I'm having the worse dark-circle day, I use the dual-ended concealer wand from Smashbox. The deceiving yellow end smoothens and "wakes up" the area even before the main event. It's technology at its finest—and my eye area at its best.

Foundation: found!

Foundation is just a fancy term for all products falling under the Perfect-Your-Skin category, but since there are heavy-duty ones available on makeup counters, I might as well share my best choices.

Maybelline Clear Smooth Foundation. The cheapest, most economical one that really works, especially for young skin that needs help in the coverage department. I use it with a damp sponge when I feel like being extra clear and smooth, but the gel formula feels as light as water when applied like moisturizer.

Skin Allison Rafaelle Reality Base. The best yellow-based shades and the smoothest consistency among all other liquid formulas out there. It's easy to blend and adjusts well to your own skin tone, so there's no need to immediately switch shades when you tan just a bit. Use your fingers when using this one—they're the best tools, trust me.

Perfect powder

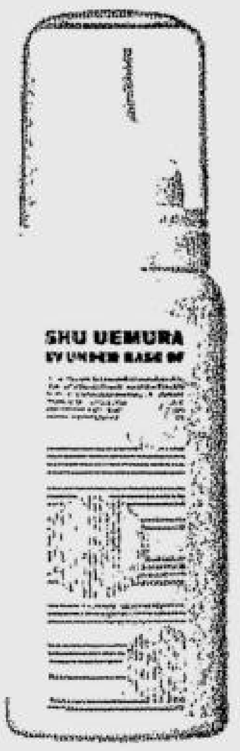
Now that you've evened everything out and covered what needs to be covered, seal the deal with a good loose powder. Don't just settle for your old compact applied with a brush; loose powder particles are much finer and really set your foundation. Tote around that compact for touch-ups, instead.

Maybelline Pure Stay Loose Powder. Again, I'm going for the affordable one that does the job. My favorite shade is Pure Cameo, which is more like a translucent powder because it goes with my skin tone even when I'm my palest self. I like using the puff before I dust my face off with a brush—and I allow the powder to settle for a few seconds before I do this.

Maybelline at PCX; Shu Uemura at Rustan's; Skin Allison Rafaelle and Smashbox at Beauty Bar; Shiseido at Glorietta and 6750.

E-mail the author at lora_gahol@yahoo.com

MAYBELLINE



MAYBELLINE Pure Stay Loose Powder (above) and Shu Uemura UV Underbase (right)

Magaling ka ba sa LOGIC?
[illegible]

Figure out who lives in what house, drinks which ROYAL TRU flavor, likes which fruit to find out [illegible]

SINO ang TRU owner ni MUNING the DOG?

CLUES :

1. Roy lives in a purple house.
2. The one who likes dalandan owns Fru-fru the fusa.
3. Chong is allergic to grapes and was once rushed to the hospital by his crush (dyahe!).
4. The owner of Ninja the Turtle lives to the right of the guy who drinks Royal Tru-Grape for breakfast!
5. The guy who likes orange is duwag of Fru-fru the fusa and lives as far from him as possible..
6. The first house is orange.
7. Al lives to the left of the guy who can drink 3 Royal Tru-Dalandans in one sitting!
8. Chong lives in the last house.
9. The guy who lives in the green house loves to eat dalandan except the buto...(pait!)

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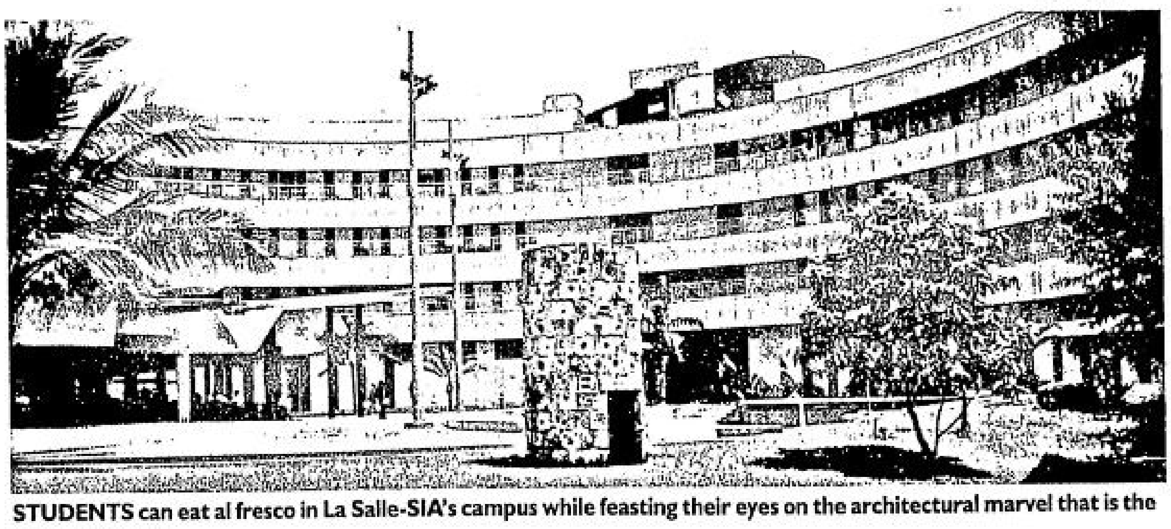
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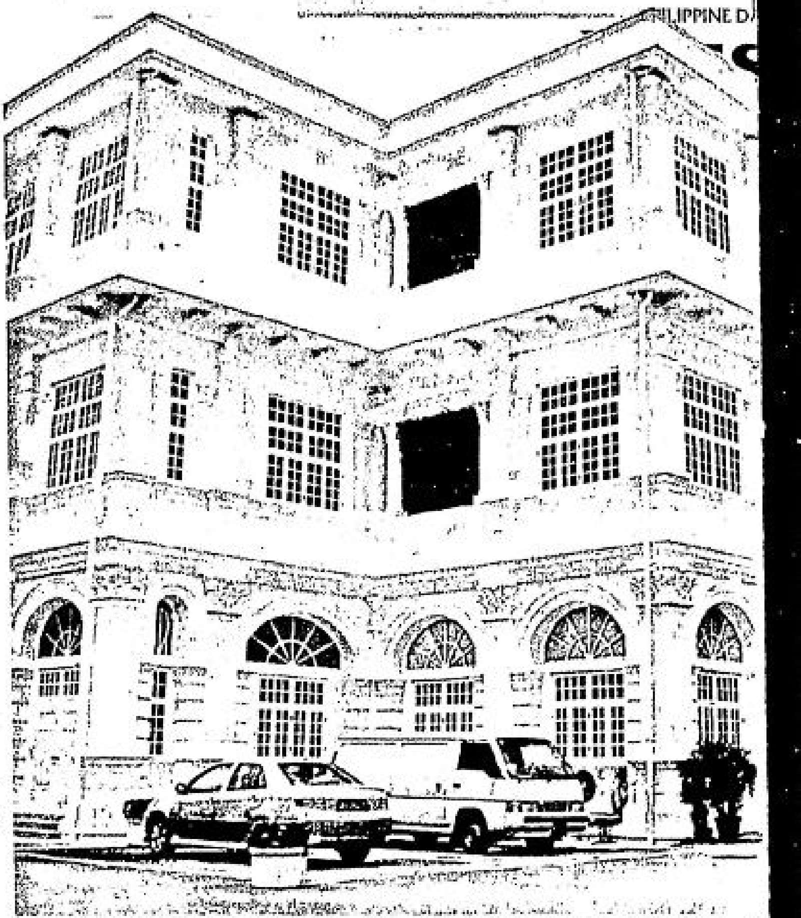
Singapore campus/tour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Text and photos by Ruth Navarra
Contributor

FIVE minutes ago you learned that the top honcho of a company listed in Forbes Magazine as one of the most successful in 2003 wants to talk about your future.

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Great. Just when you're wearing a shirt you chose for comfort, not elegance. Your jeans, stylish as they may seem for a casual walk in the park, is a bit tacky for an all-important meeting. Let's not even get to your shoes.

You consider your options. You could run home, feign sickness and ask for a reschedule. Or you could go to the Finishing Room and blow top man away with your confidence and grace under pressure.

The Finishing Room is one of Singapore Management University (SMU)'s unique features. It's a room where there's a choice of elegant shoes, corporate get-up and makeup that students can borrow for scenarios much like this one.

SMU believes that networking begins even before you get out of school. That's why it sends out students' resumes to different companies before they graduate.

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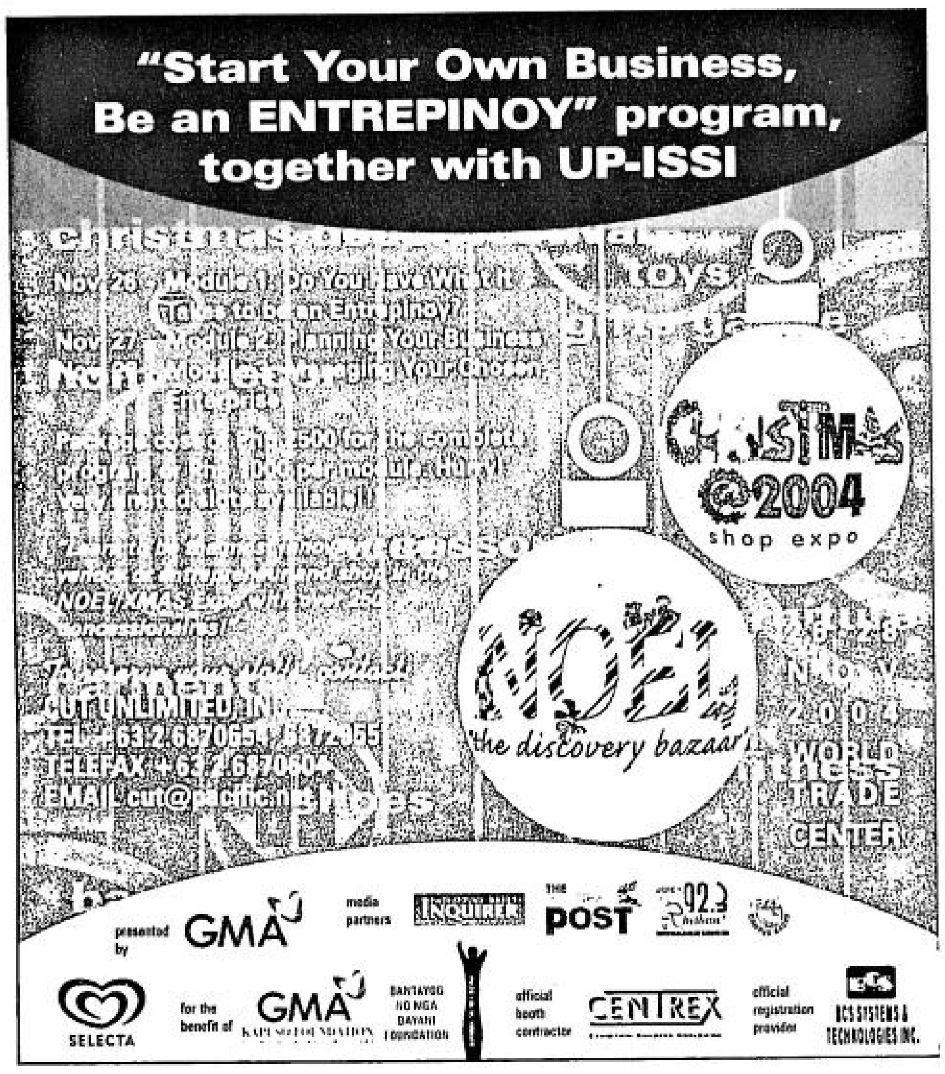
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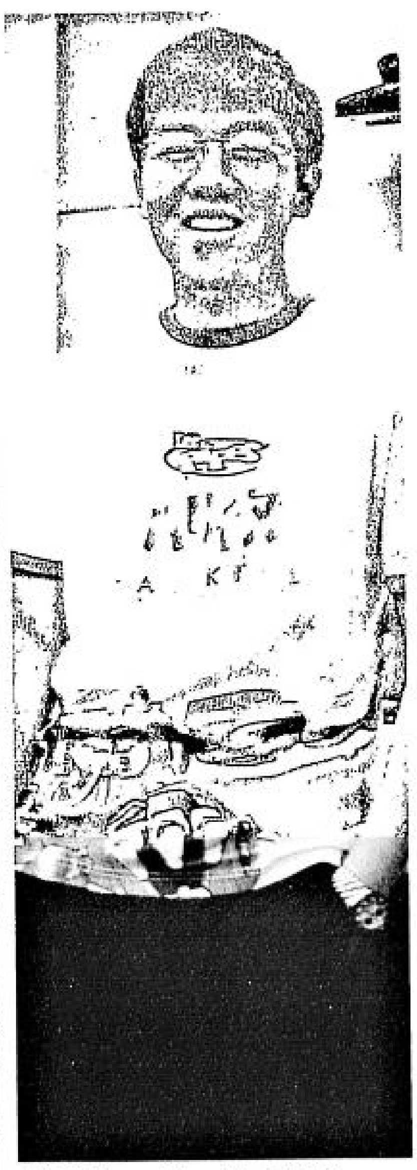
ALGER Lim smiling shyly in his Ateneo shirt and shorts

TO SURVIVE in Singapore, Filipino students had to do major adjustments in their lifestyles. And we're not just talking about what direction to look when crossing the road (Singapore's a right-hand drive country).

Alger Benedict Lim, a student of Singapore Institute of Management (SIM), says there's been a 180-degree turn from his regular Manila life.

"I stopped drinking when I began studying in Singapore. It wasn't a choice. Alcoholic drinks here are so expensive," he shares. Bowling, billiards and movies every Saturday constitute his recreational activities.

Alger comes from an affluent Chinese family in Manila. But in Singapore, he leads an ordinary life, riding the MRT, LRT and buses. After the Sunday Mass, he walks on Orchard Road without fear. It is an exercise he says he sorely misses whenever he's in Manila.

"My mom worries for my safety when I'm in the Philippines," he says. "I intend to take advantage of my freedom here."

His small room, shared with another student in the Stamford overseas student residence, is a far cry from what he's used to. He opens his laptop on the bed because the small desk is too cluttered for it.

Meanwhile, Caryle "Kay" Aguilar from La Salle-SIA has a part-time job at a local TV channel to earn part of her allowance.

She no longer gets distracted with the number of malls in Singapore. She says the longer you stay, the more the novelty of shopping loses its appeal.

Quincy Teofisto, Kay's flatmate and schoolmate, shares that his biggest challenge to fit in was adjusting his accent. "You can't use too much "r" in your sentences," he says.

The two students are recipients of a grant from the Singaporean government. To live comfortably, they say, means allotting at least S$800-S$1,500 a month on expenses.

Text and photos by Ruth L. Navarra

ART budd work part

DANCIN Concepci students i things to s

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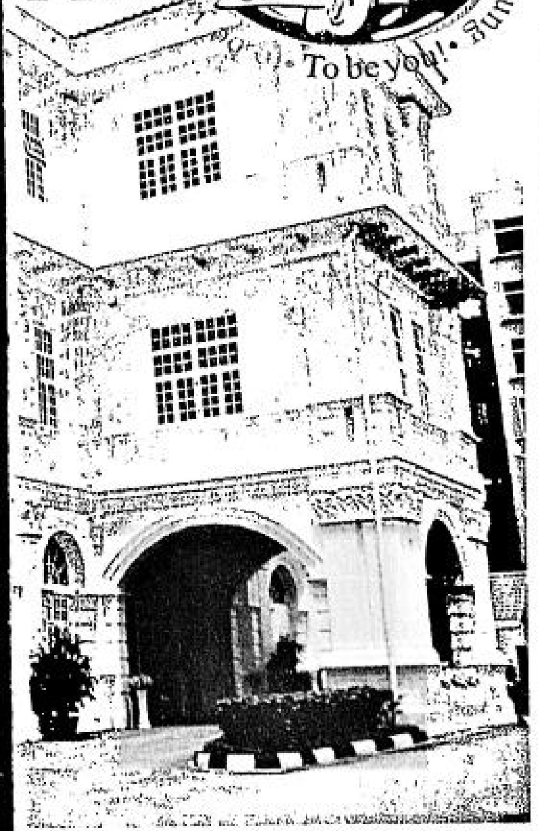


otel and tourism college in Singapore.

duct interviews inside the SMU campus. In fact, the students are trained for such a situation.

SMU students are not only well-versed in the intricacies of business and management, but also in fine dining and wine vintage!

Performance-based school

Meanwhile, at the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM), students are pampered with billiard tables, dart boards and a mini soccer table right on campus. But the school means business with its unique curriculum.

"We have subjects that are project-based. We have no lectures and exams on those subjects, but 100 percent of our grades come from the result of our performance," says Alger Lim, the first and only Filipino student in SIM.

In Developing Professional Practice, for example, a student offers his free services to a company. The company must present a current problem and the student will have to do the research for them to come up with a feasible solution.

Lim says that with many companies in Singapore having previous experience with SIM students, it's easy for them to get an internship. It's also gratifying when the companies follow the recommendations the students present.

"But it's hard. I only have four subjects this semester, but I spend six days a week in school to do research," says Lim.

On some subjects where the students do have lectures and exams, coffee, tea and snacks are made available in the classrooms for free.

Culinary bastion

All those perks are fine, but if you think you'd rather wield a spatula than a calculator, then Shatec just might be the campus for you.

In this school, "A"—as in the grade in your card—is not important. Instead, it wants good "A"—as in "attitude"—from its students.

A center of excellence for culinary arts, Shatec trains students in two fine dining restaurants—the Rosette and Petals. There, students prepare everything for the guests.

As far as hotel and restaurant services are concerned, Johanna Toh, Shatec's manager of marketing communication, is happy to note that the school produces students who are ready to work pronto, so there's no need for companies to retrain them.

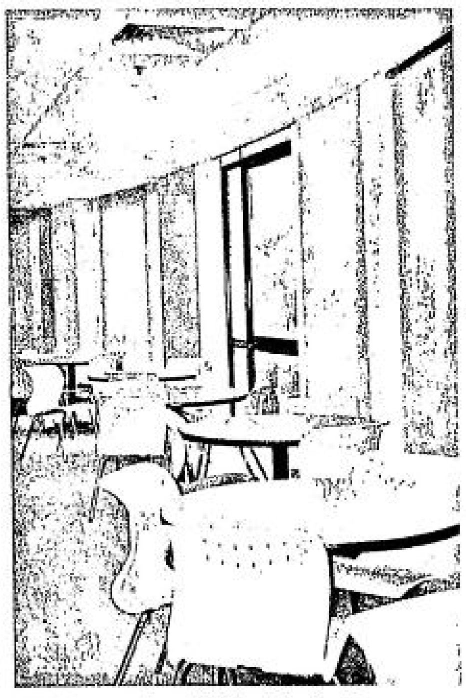
Art sanctuary

Well, if you're the misunderstood artist and everybody tells you that different spices glued together is junk, not art, better pack your bags and go to La Salle-SIA.

Here, you can spend your days designing fonts that would be tagged as "art." As a school specializing in contemporary arts, La Salle-SIA knows that technology does not make you a lesser artist. Therefore, the school's curriculum tries not to put boundaries on what you can do.

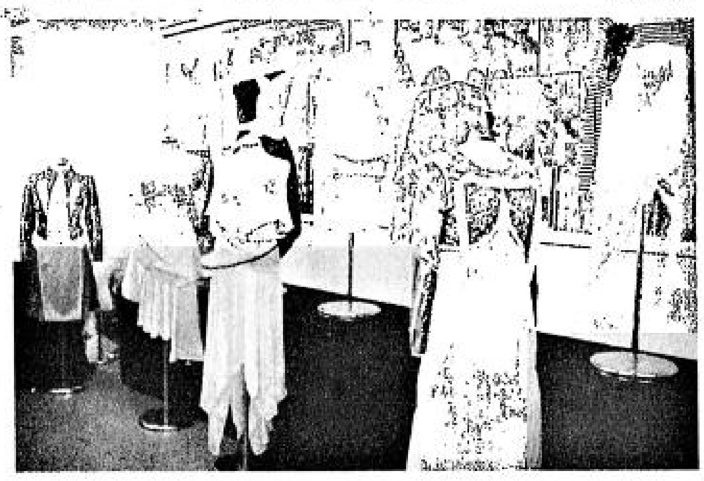
The school also offers a degree in Performing Arts and integrated studies for people who are serious about acting and dancing. It's a full course, so you will get a diploma after. Now, that's something you wouldn't ordinarily get from summer workshops.

Visit www.singaporeedu.go.sg.



NO, it's not a hotel lobby, it's the Singapore Institute of Management's student lounge.

FINE dining courtesy of Shatec students



WILL you dare to wear them on the streets? Some of the clothes designed by the students of La Salle-SIA

City

ies Caryle Aguilar and Quincy Teofisto have to
-time to make ends meet.

G their way to the top. Jay Españo and Red
on are part of the first batch of Performing Arts
n La Salle-SIA. Their teachers have only good
ay about the two.

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Enter the 'MTV/Philips WHATEVERTHINGS Show Host Contest' now. "Wow" us with your craziest, most off the wall "whatever" idea. And if it knocks us off our seats, you'll get to compete with other crazy folks in the national finals on October 16, 2004 at the Glorietta 4, Cinema lobby, Ayala Center, Makati City. If you win, you could end up at the regional finals in China. Beat out your competitors as the craziest one in Asia and you'll team up with Edison Chen (yes!) to host the MTV Whatever Things programme. What are you waiting for? Let's do this thing!

WEBSITE : www.mtvasia.com EMAIL : whateverthings@mtv-asia.com SNAIL MAIL : MTV WhateverThings Show Host Contest, 1696 Makati Central Post Office, 1256 Makati City, Philippines

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RAMON Christopher, Richard Gutierrez and TonTon Gutierrez participated in the event.

MORE speed freaks, among them Dingdong Dantes and Cong. Francis Escudero

HOT, HOT, HOT. The Viva Hot Babes as flag girls

Great race, great day

rting challenge

POWER OF FOUR. Richard Gomez, Bobby Andrews, Sen. Mar Roxas and Anjo Yllana made tires squeal that day.

Text and photos by J.R. Victorio
2bU! Correspondent

IT WAS a flaming Friday at The Fort. The heat and passion fired up the tracks of Speedzone, a world-class carting race track in Taguig. As the last leg of a series of events to launch Nivea's new line of skin care for men, the celebrity carting challenge gathered the country's top celebrities from show biz and politics.

With sweat all over my body, I headed toward the registration area quickly to sign up. But I had to stay a few more minutes since my name wasn't on the guest list. To top it all, the reception people weren't a bit receptive. The matter was cleared up soon, thanks to the Fuentes publicity group.

Inside the comforts of the press and celebrity area, I settled down to compose myself. I found myself amid actors, actresses and sponsors.

Present were Sen. Mar Roxas, who was later cheered by news anchor Korina Sanchez, Rep. Francis Escudero, Miles Roces and Albert Garcia, Richard Gomez, who was joined by his wife Lucy and daughter, Anjo Yllana, Paolo Araneta, Dingdong Dantes, Dominic Ochoa, Albert Martinez, Marc Nelson, Troy Montero, Brad Turvey, Geoff Rodriguez, KC Montero, Marc Abaya, Paolo Paraiso, Gary Estrada, Bobby Andrews, Derek Ramsey, Epy Quizon, Joey Marquez, Paolo Valenciano, Tonton Gutierrez, international singer Keith Martin, Ramon Christopher, Richard Gutierrez, Arnel Ignacio, Bernard and Mico Palanca and David Bunevacz.

Female participants included Dyan Castillejo, Agot Isidro, Raven Villanueva, Patricia Javier, Jackie Forster, Diana Zubiri, Sheree, LJ Moreno and Phoemela Barranda. Livening up the event were hosts Martin Nievera and Jackie Castillejo who both fired up the stage with their antics.

Flag girls Jen Rosendahl, Asia Agcaolli and Katrina Hernandez fired up the pit stop with their sexy bodies.

In the audience were Gary Valenciano, Mylene Dizon, Geneva Cruz, with son Heaven, Ann Curtis, G Töngi and Liezl Martinez.

The event's biggest winner was Paolo Valenciano, of team Nivea Sun. He finished first.

Covering the event was a challenge. Witnessing every event and at the same time trying to chase every moment worth capturing in my digital cam was an arduous task, but thanks to people from the Fuentes public relations team, I didn't feel exhausted at the end of the night.

We capped the night with a round of cold beer and enjoyed a performance by Side A. At the end of the day, some came home with trophies and prizes, others were empty-handed. But because of the fellowship and the goodwill, it seemed everyone came home a winner.

Speedzone at The Fort is open everyday except Monday, 3 p.m. to 12 midnight.

THE COVETED trophies

PATRICIA Javier with Keith Martin

Gary Valenciano's son Paolo won the race, but with the new friendships built, everyone was a winner

LJ MORENO, Jackie Forster, Raven Villanueva, Sheree and Diana Zubiri

GLOWING girls—courtesy of Nivea

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See posters and print ads for more details.
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Heal the world

Unicef's Volunteer Internship Program brought together 12 young dreamers who wanted to make a difference in kids' lives

By Jay Chiu
Contributor

VIP participants hard at work organizing and manning events to benefit kids

SUPER VOLUNTEERS. Their goal was to raise funds for Unicef programs in the Philippines.

UNICEF is a worldwide organization that aids children in less developed countries. Here in the Philippines, Unicef has launched an innovative way of tapping the spirit of volunteerism in the Filipino youth, and it is called the Unicef Volunteer Internship Program or VIP.

I was very fortunate to be included in this batch of young people whose primary goal is to raise much-needed funds for the projects of Unicef in the Philippines.

We 12 volunteers came from different backgrounds and environments. Normally, we wouldn't have come together and hung out, but the spirit of volunteerism called to each one of us.

Twin bill

The VIPs were tasked to organize and manage fundraising events. Fortunately, we were able to organize two, namely the Unicef mall tours and the Unicef *ukay-ukay*.

"Hi Sir! Hi Ma'am! Would you like to join our pledge program or donate a little amount to Unicef?" That was my line during the Unicef mall tours.

I was assigned to booth in Glorietta, which was bustling with people. Approaching complete strangers was very hard. We talked to people who passed by the booth and explained Unicef's programs to them.

Let me tell you, every person we talked to was a different experience. I met kind and concerned people who wanted to help, but others just completely ignored me. Other people thought we were from a credit card company and shooed us away. (I now have more respect for people in credit card booths in the malls).

But other people approached the Unicef booth themselves and donated money or things, even without us approaching them. I was even able to approach President Macapagal-Arroyo's daughter, Luli, who very graciously told me she was already on the Unicef pledge program (a monthly contribution to Unicef).

I was also able to talk to former First Lady Imelda Marcos. It was quite scary because of her bodyguards and the people who surrounded us while we talked. It was like those scenes in prom night movies where people would form a circle and watch you dance. Well, I thought we were going to dance because madame Imelda was already dressed in her Filipiniana outfit.

Our mall tour efforts paid off. We got about P31,000 when we combined our money with those from the Robinsons Galleria booth. We also got pledges and donors for our *ukay-ukay*. It was great!

I also got to man the Unicef booth inside the ABS-CBN compound, where I got to talk to Edu Manzano, Bayani Agbayani, Arnel Ignacio, Ai-Ai dela Alas, Angelica Cruz, John Prats, Rica Peralejo and a lot of other stars! It was awesome talking to people who make us laugh or cry, and asking them for donations to Unicef!

'Ukay-ukay' by the river

Next thing we tackled was an *ukay-ukay* in Marikina Riverbanks. Before the event, we had to advertise on radio and subdivision associations to ask for donations of old but still usable clothes. Then we sorted them out and checked the quality of each item. Only then did we have the Unicef *ukay-kay*!

The flow of people was slow at first. I got some volunteers to distribute flyers inside the Riverbanks mall, since we found out that many people were not aware of the *ukay-ukay*.

Nevertheless, they were really interested when they heard about it. In the following days, people started to come, and we sold our items like crazy. On our last night we had a "*bitbit*-all-you-can" promo, where you paid just P50 for everything you could fit inside one plastic bag.

We also sold autographed items from stars like Sharon Cuneta, Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, Heart Evangelista, Diether Ocampo, Cherie Gil, South Border and Gary Valenciano, the Unicef goodwill ambassador.

The *ukay-ukay* was a great place for learning about the Philippine marketplace. A lot of bargaining took place in each stall. The discounting depended on how good the buyer was in asking for *tawad*. I sold blouses for as low as P5! That's much cheaper than prices in Tutuban.

I also met a woman who asked if the clothes were second-hand. When I told her they were already used, she gave me a totally disgusted look. Oh well, you can't please everyone.

When we tallied our profits from our three-day sale, we got a whopping P101,000 for our efforts! All our hard work was so worth it! Take note that this was just a mini-*ukay-ukay*. Later this year, we will organize our Mega Big Big Ukay-Ukay.

But the Volunteer Internship Program has really nothing to do with how much money we make. It's about giving hope and joy to Filipino children and other kids of the world in whatever way we can.

It enabled me to gain more self-confidence; I found new friends in my VIP comrades (Aids, Rach, Missy, Ziggy, Jackie, Alex, Tanya, Jobeth, Roney, Marc, Ralph, Tricia, Tintin and Ms Lelet), and I enjoyed meeting so many kids. For six weeks they were my family, and I am the better for it.

Jay Chiu is a 20-year-old Business Administration student from University of Santo Tomas.

Visit www.unicef.org/philippines

We publish stories about young people and groups who are trying to make a difference. Submit articles or send us suggestions at ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph. Because age is not a hindrance, it's a springboard for change.

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See poster mechanics and flyers for details
Per DTI-NCR Permit No 2103 Series of 2004

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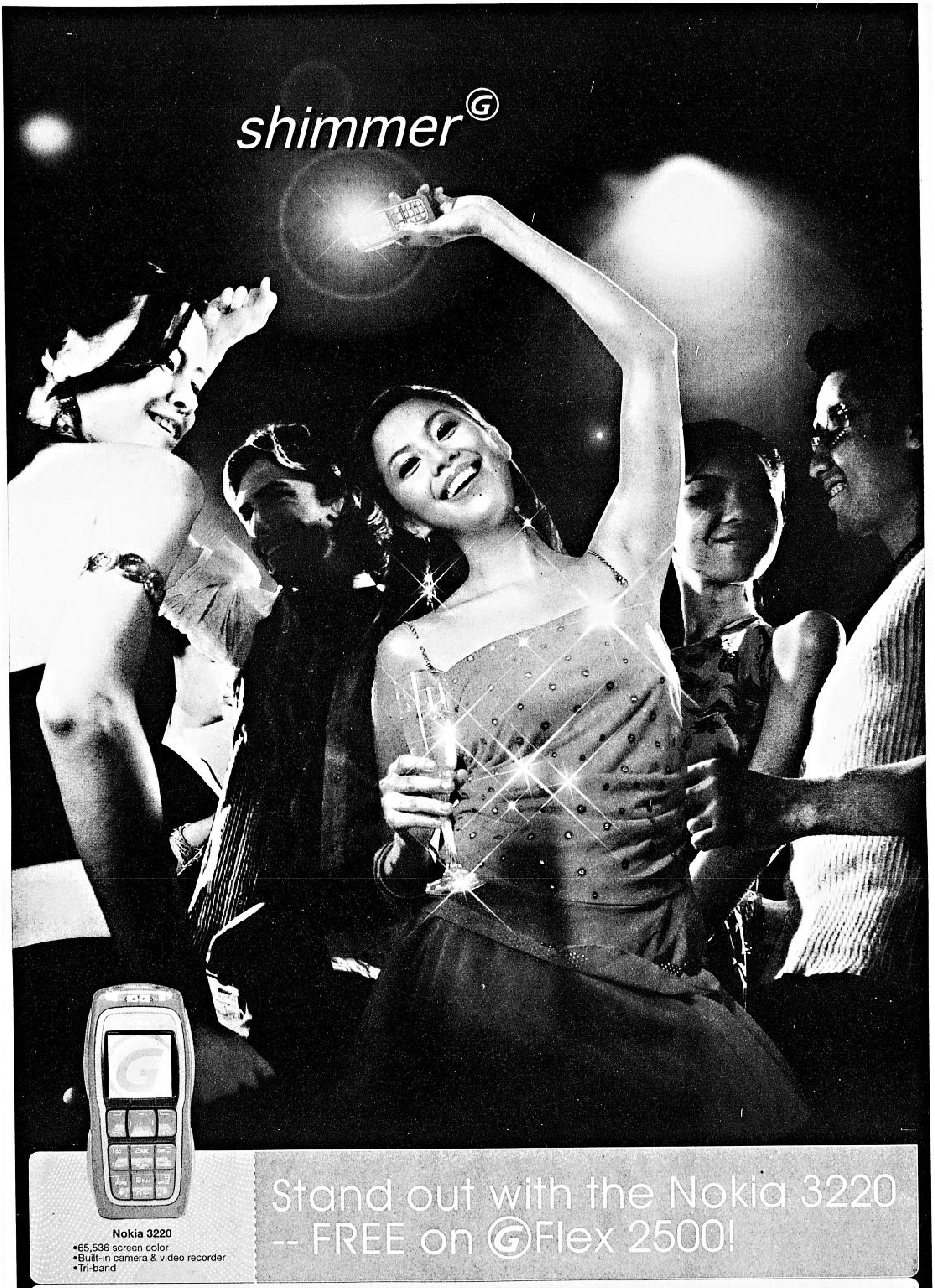

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G Flex 2,500	P 2,500	350	P 4.50	P 5.50
G Flex 3,500	P 3,500	400	P 4.00	P 4.50
G Flex 5,000	P 5,000	400	P 4.00	P 4.50
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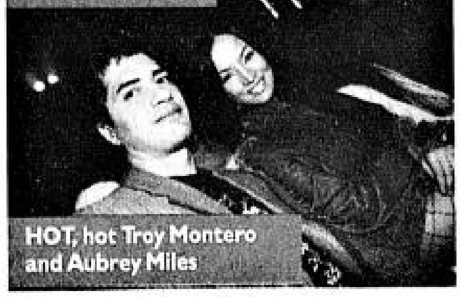
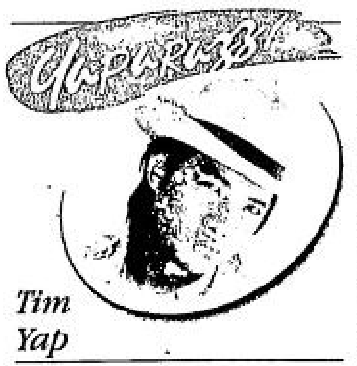
MTV super VJs Marc, Sarah, KC and Cindy


HOT, hot Troy Montero and Aubrey Miles

Do blondes have more fun?



Tim Yap

It has been less than a week since hair master **Henri Calayag** decided to magically transform my black bangs into bleached blondhood.

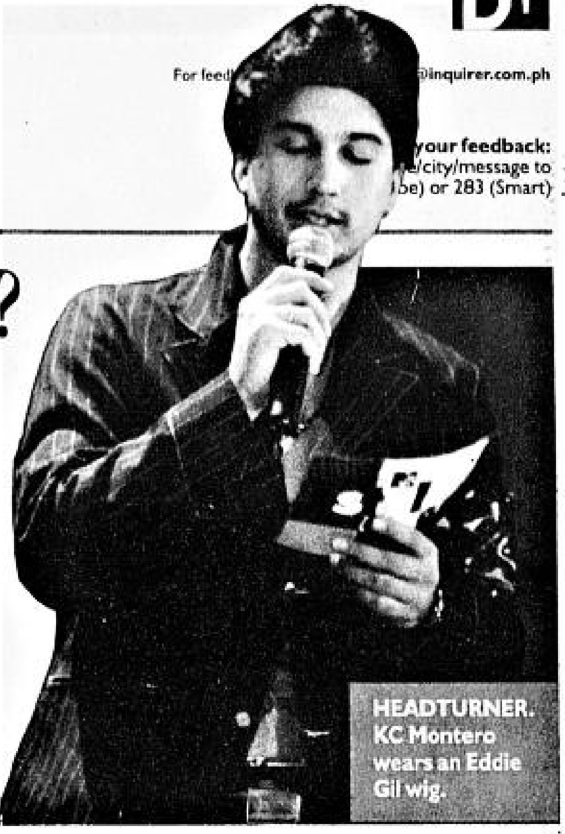
The last time I did this, I remember, I looked like Pikachu of Pokemon—but that was what we were gunning for.

I looked at the mirror of H Salon at Rustan's while getting ready for the 1st MTV Style Awards, and it was styled its usual way, with edgy bangs covering one side of my face (which, according to Cosmo's **Myrza Sison**, is the secret of youth). And then I realized I looked like Adam, a.k.a. He-Man ("By the castle of Gray Skuuullll!").

So, instead of looking like an Asian version of **Dolph Lundgren** (where's he, anyway?), I decided to have my hair up, pompadour style, so as to emphasize height. I looked again in the mirror and I felt like the monkey king in those old Shaolin movies shown on RPN 9 when we were kids. Oh well, I'm sure even **Britney** or **Beckham** had those days when they wished they weren't blonde.

But being the fair-haired boy has its rewards. For one, I don't

DO BLONDES/ D3


HEADTURNER. KC Montero wears an Eddie Gil wig.

Big hearts wanted

HAVE you been devoting your time to making the world a better place? Have you been pledging your hours to good causes? Do you know someone dedicated to service?

Join "Change the World Through Volunteerism: The Search for the Best Student Volunteer."

We are looking for the college students with a passion for volunteerism. You can nominate yourself or nominate someone else you know.

Send us a photo copy of the nominee's school ID, photos of the nominee and answers to this questionnaire:

Name:
Age:
School:
Course:
Tell us about your volunteer experience (projects, organizations):
Which cause are you most passionate about? (e.g. poverty, environment, etc.)
Why should you be chosen as the Best Student Volunteer?

Entries may be sent to "Change the World Through Volunteerism: The Search for the Best Student Volunteer," Philippine Daily Inquirer Bldg., Don Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City; or e-mail changetheworld@inquirer.com.ph.

Deadline of submission is on Oct. 11, 12 noon. All nominees will automatically receive a gift pack from Hands On Manila and Inquirer.

We will be selecting 20 nominees who will each get a gift pack from Bench and be featured on the pages of 2bU!

On Oct. 24, Hands On Manila and INQUIRER will have a whole-day affair at the NBC Tent called "VIP: Volunteer in Person," in celebration of the third anniversary of Hands On Manila.

This event, which is sponsored by EON, Inc., Bench/HerBench, kiddieparty.com, will be a fun full-day celebration of the selfless act of volunteerism. At this event, the top 20 nominees will be escorted down the ramp by UAAP players, models and celebrities in a fashion show directed by Ariel Lozada.

The three best volunteers will also be announced at this event, along with the winner of the People's Choice category.

Winners will receive plaques and exciting prizes.

All these, because your big heart and generous spirit deserve to be in the spotlight.

GUYITO WILD HUNT

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Promo Period: Sept. 27- Dec. 14, 2004
Deadline of Entries:
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Grand Draw: Dec. 14, 2004
Draw Dates:
Monthly Draw: October 22 and Nov. 22, 2004
Grand Draw: Dec. 21, 2004

See posters and print ads for details.
Per DTI Permit No. 2147, series of 2004

Drop in drop boxes located at Ayala and Robinson's cinema lobbies, and all LBC and Netopia branches You may also mail entries to: Guyito Wild Hunt, PDI Bldg., corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City

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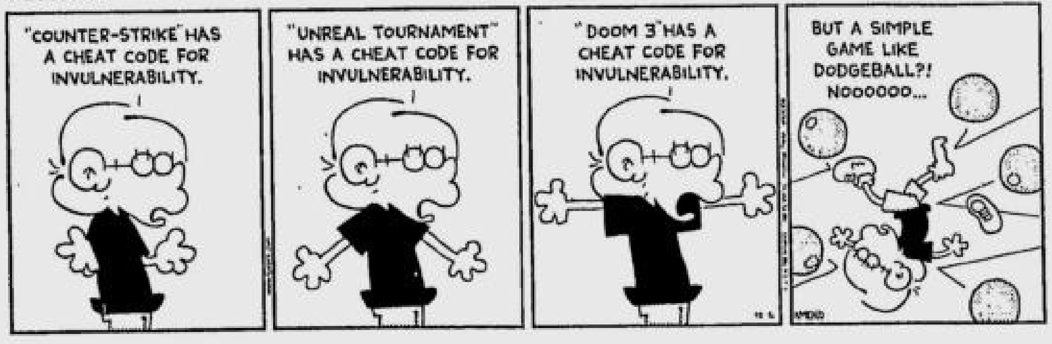
BY BILL AMEND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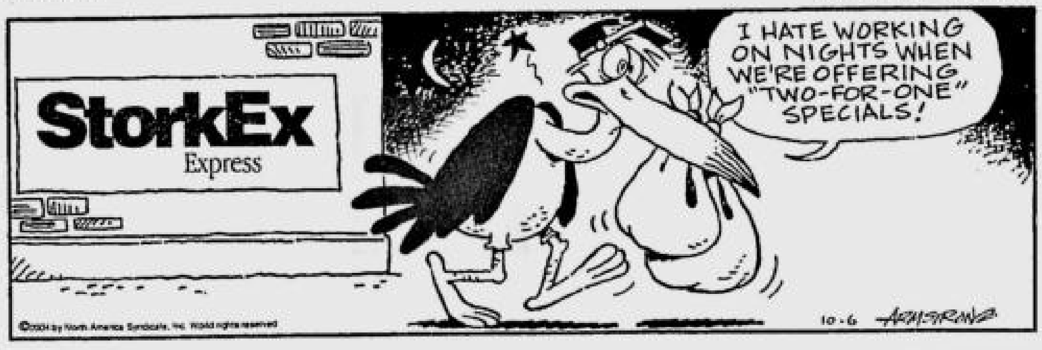
BY TOM ARMSTRONG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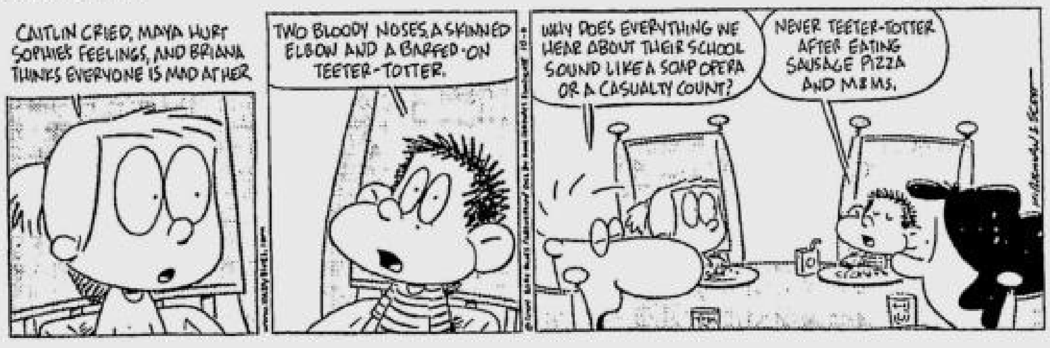
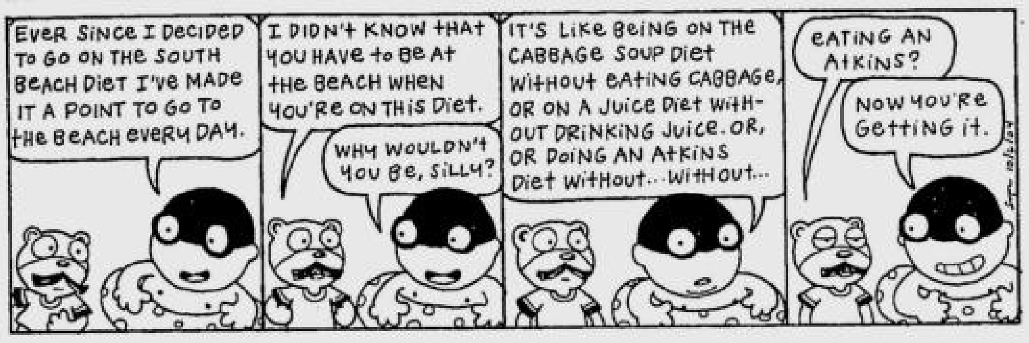
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


CAITLIN CRIED, MAYA HURT SOPHIE'S FEELINGS, AND BRIANA THINKS EVERYONE IS MAD AT HER.
TWO BLOODY NOSES, A SKINNED ELBOW AND A BARFED-ON TEETER-TOTTER.
WHY DOES EVERYTHING WE HEAR ABOUT THEIR SCHOOL SOUND LIKE A SOAP OPERA OR A CASUALTY COUNT?
NEVER TEETER-TOTTER AFTER EATING SAUSAGE PIZZA AND M&MS.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


EVER SINCE I DECIDED TO GO ON THE SOUTH BEACH DIET I'VE MADE IT A POINT TO GO TO THE BEACH EVERY DAY.
I DIDN'T KNOW THAT YOU HAVE TO BE AT THE BEACH WHEN YOU'RE ON THIS DIET.
WHY WOULDN'T YOU BE, SILLY?
IT'S LIKE BEING ON THE CABBAGE SOUP DIET WITHOUT EATING CABBAGE, OR ON A JUICE DIET WITHOUT DRINKING JUICE. OR, OR DOING AN ATKINS DIET WITHOUT... WITHOUT...
EATING AN ATKINS?
NOW YOU'RE GETTING IT.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a lively sense of adventure. Your belief in a positive outcome gives you courage. Because you care, you want to improve the lives of others. You love a good time and always live life to the fullest. People like you because you make them feel good. Work hard this year for rewards next year.
Birthdate of: Ioan Gruffudd, actor; Elisabeth Shue, actress; Jeremy Sisto, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Unexpected goodies might come your way today at work. Something pleasant could fall in your lap. You might also develop a crush on a co-worker today. (Interesting.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): New love can bloom today (eyes across a crowded room and all that)! If this happens, it will be with someone quite unlikely. This person has a different background and culture.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Unresolved tensions with family members might suddenly explode today. Whatever happens is something that has been stewing for a long time.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your daily routine will definitely be interrupted.Don't expect things to unfold as usual. A sudden change of plans, unexpected news and unusual people surprise you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): "When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping." It's definitely that kind of day. Impromptu, spontaneous purchases are likely. Guard against losing money, however.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): A new relationship could begin today. Or something might suddenly come to head in a long-term relationship. People want to put their cards on the table and get things straight.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You feel restless and impatient today. Basically, you're looking for some excitement to happen. You've had it with boring, routine predictability. (Yawn.)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): A friend could be the source of some surprising news. Or you might meet a real character today. Either way, others are certainly not boring! Stay tuned.

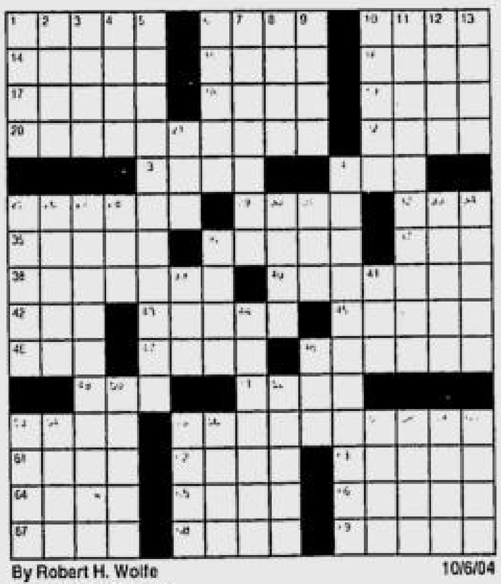
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Tread carefully around parents, teachers and bosses. They are likely to explode today with very slight provocation. (People are still ticked off about old business.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You want to do anything that is offbeat, challenging and different today. You want fun and adventure! Unexpected opportunities to travel or sudden travel cancellations are possible.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Unexpected gifts and goodies could come your way today. Opportunities for increased credit, reduced debt, a bonus for your partner or a direct gift to you will bring a smile to your face.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Some kind of flirtation might be unsettling to you. Perhaps somebody else flirts with your loved one. Not cool! Or perhaps you find someone completely new to flirt with. (Hmmm—this is more interesting.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

10/6/04

ACROSS
1 Poisonous plant
6 Put on weight
10 Fairy-tale villain
14 Up and about
15 Push for
16 Most important point
17 Amazon tributary
18 Put in the hold
19 Necklace fastener
20 Tux adjunct
22 Exxon, once
23 Oriental sauces
24 Hesitation syllables
25 Take stock of
29 Actress Gill
32 Mil. noncom
35 That is to say
36 Basketry material
37 Clan members
38 Getting up
40 Flying alone
42 Notes of scales
43 Pinball jars
45 Actor Flynn
46 Those elected
47 Singer Laine
48 African fly
49 H.S. part
51 Physiques, casually
53 Sheep shelter
55 Copper-zinc alloy artisan
61 Draft classification
62 That hurt!
63 Macabre
64 Worrier's word
65 Twice preceder
66 Stage whisper
67 Wee one
68 Portico of ancient Greece
69 Cut with light

DOWN
1 Rub smooth
2 Consumer
3 Loan letters
4 Something to put on?
5 Embroidery pattern
6 Emotionally demonstrative
7 "__ & Models"
8 Borodin's prince
9 Tiny salamander.
10 Orange pigment
11 Hula garb
12 Tim of "Star Trek: Voyager"
13 Big show, for short
21 Crisis letters
24 True or harp marine mammal
25 Video-game pioneer company
26 Philosopher Kierkegaard
27 Braised entree
28 Berlin ice
30 Snake's warning
31 Want ad abbr.
33 Mythological king of Crete
34 Viewpoint
36 Stare at
39 Nothing at all
41 Mine deposit
44 "__ Road"
48 NFL scores
50 Stop
52 Actor Milo
53 Thin layer
54 And nothing more
55 Ghostly greetings
56 Litter's littlest
57 Desert bluff
58 Part of an eye
59 Ocean motion
60 Take note of

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

S	H	R	E	D	■	P	E	P	■	W	E	E	P	Y
W	E	A	V	E	■	A	V	E	■	E	X	T	R	A
A	L	I	E	N	■	T	I	E	■	E	P	S	O	M
M	I	D	N	I	G	H	T	R	I	D	E	■	■	■
P	O	S	T	A	L	■	A	S	H	■	D	E	A	H
■	■	■	S	L	A	G	■	■	O	P	I	A	T	E
P	A	L	■	■	D	A	W	N	P	A	T	R	O	L
A	C	R	I	D	■	M	A	O	■	D	E	L	L	A
N	O	O	N	D	A	Y	S	U	N	■	■	S	L	Y
D	R	O	N	E	S	■	■	N	A	I	L	■	■	■
A	N	N	O	■	T	O	W	■	S	N	A	K	E	D
■	■	■	T	W	I	L	I	G	H	T	Z	O	N	E
C	U	R	I	E	■	I	D	O	■	A	U	R	A	S
P	R	I	M	E	■	V	O	N	■	C	L	A	C	K
A	N	D	E	S	■	E	W	E	■	T	I	N	T	S

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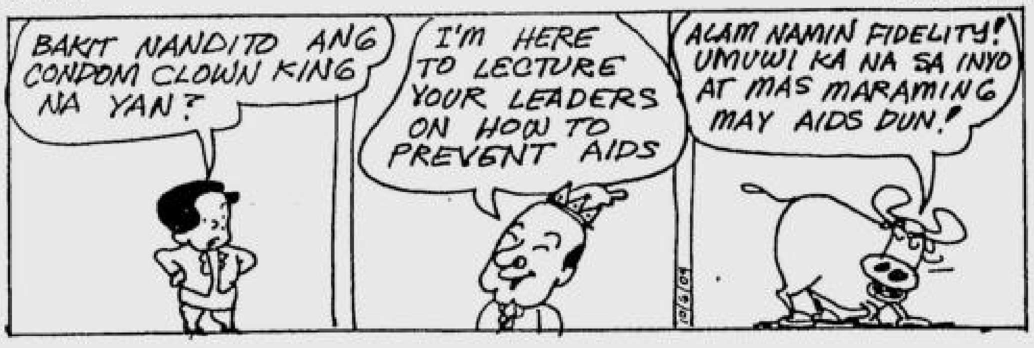
10/5/04

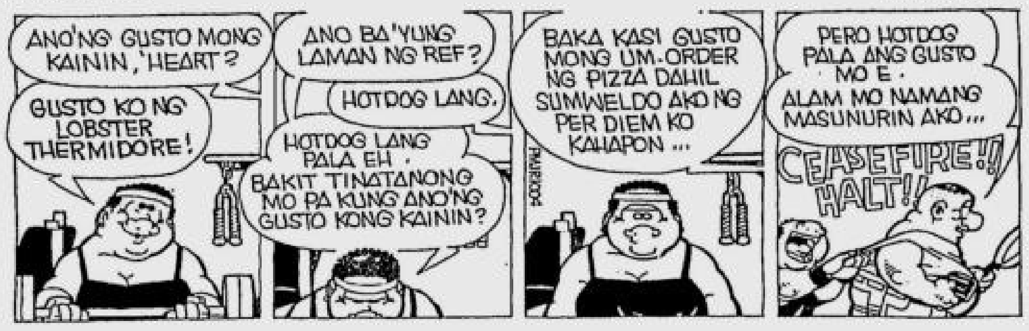
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BAKIT NANDITO ANG CONDOM CLOWN KING NA YAN?
I'M HERE TO LECTURE YOUR LEADERS ON HOW TO PREVENT AIDS
ALAM NAMIN FIDELITY! UMUWI KA NA SA INYO AT MAS MARAMING MAY AIDS DUN!
10/6/04

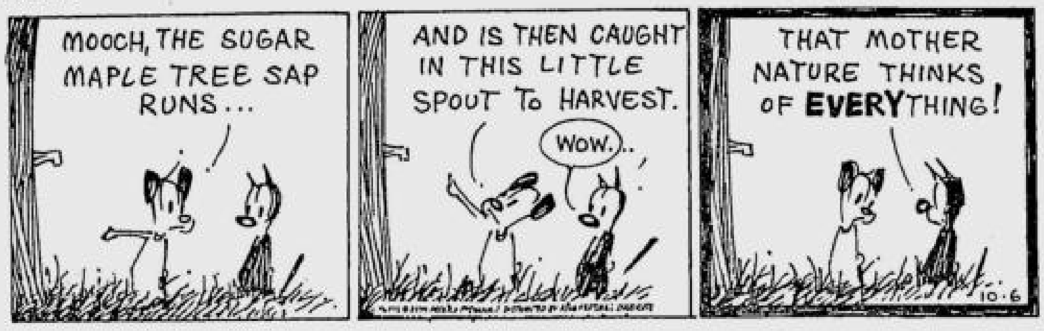
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANO'NG GUSTO MONG KAININ, 'HEART?
GUSTO KO NG LOBSTER THERMIDORE!
ANO BA'YUNG LAMAN NG REF?
HOTDOG LANG.
HOTDOG LANG PALA EH. BAKIT TINATANONG MO PA KUNG ANO'NG GUSTO KONG KAININ?
BAKA KASI GUSTO MONG UM-ORDER NG PIZZA DAHIL SUMWELDO AKO NG PER DIEM KO KAHAPON ...
PERO HOTDOG PALA ANG GUSTO MO E. ALAM MO NAMANG MASUNURIN AKO...
CEASEFIRE!! HALT!!

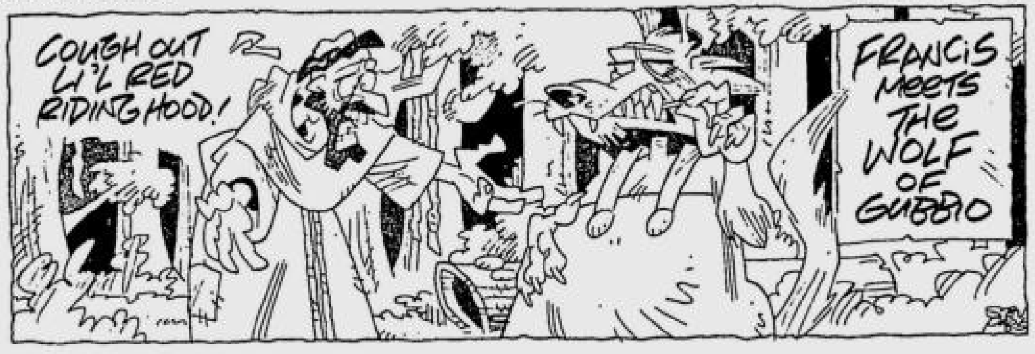
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH, THE SUGAR MAPLE TREE SAP RUNS...
AND IS THEN CAUGHT IN THIS LITTLE SPOUT TO HARVEST.
WOW...
THAT MOTHER NATURE THINKS OF EVERYTHING!
10-6

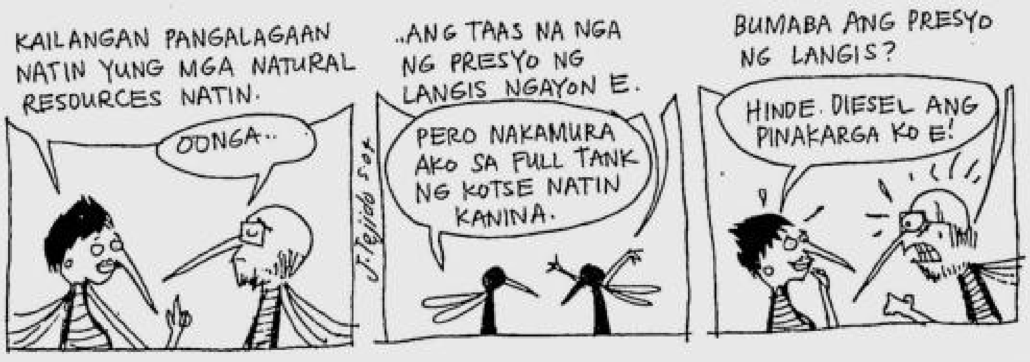
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


COUGH OUT LI'L RED RIDING HOOD!
FRANCIS MEETS THE WOLF OF GUBBIO

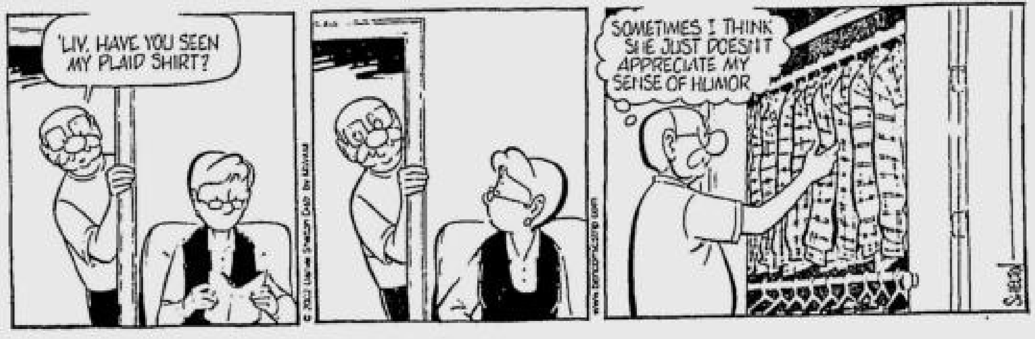
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


KAILANGAN PANGALAGAAN NATIN YUNG MGA NATURAL RESOURCES NATIN.
OONGA..
..ANG TAAS NA NGA NG PRESYO NG LANGIS NGAYON E.
PERO NAKAMURA AKO SA FULL TANK NG KOTSE NATIN KANINA.
J. Tejido '04
BUMABA ANG PRESYO NG LANGIS?
HINDE. DIESEL ANG PINAKARGA KO E!

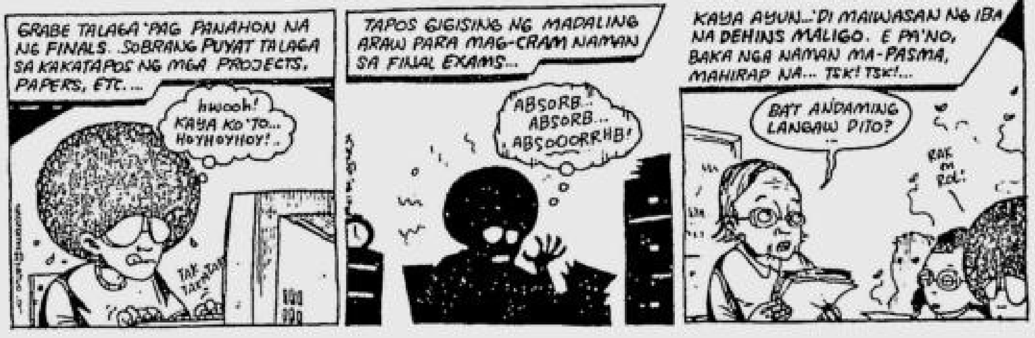
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


'LIV, HAVE YOU SEEN MY PLAID SHIRT?
SOMETIMES I THINK SHE JUST DOESN'T APPRECIATE MY SENSE OF HUMOR

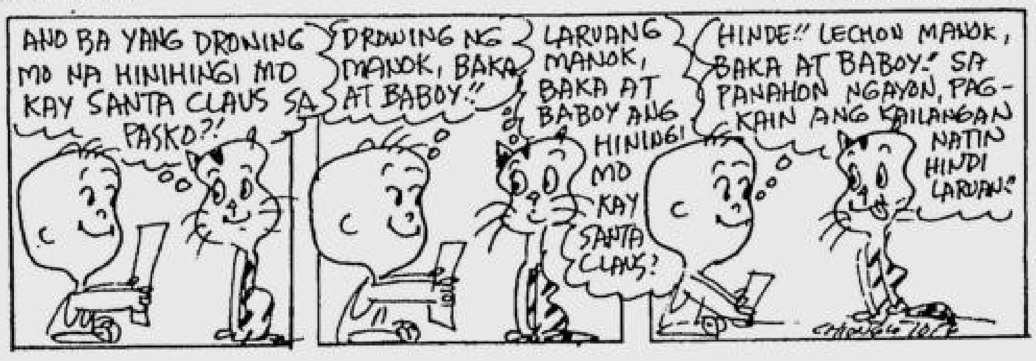
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GRABE TALAGA 'PAG PANAHON NA NG FINALS. SOBRANG PUYAT TALAGA SA KAKATAPOS NG MGA PROJECTS, PAPERS, ETC. ...
hwooh! KAYA KO 'TO... HOYHOYHOY!..
TAK TAKATAK
TAPOS GIGISING NG MADALING ARAW PARA MAG-CRAM NAMAN SA FINAL EXAMS...
ABSORB... ABSORB... ABSOOORRHB!
KAYA AYUN...'DI MAIWASAN NG IBA NA DEHINS MALIGO. E PA'NO, BAKA NGA NAMAN MA-PASMA, MAHIRAP NA... TSK! TSK!...
BAT ANDAMING LANGAW DITO?
RAK EN ROL!

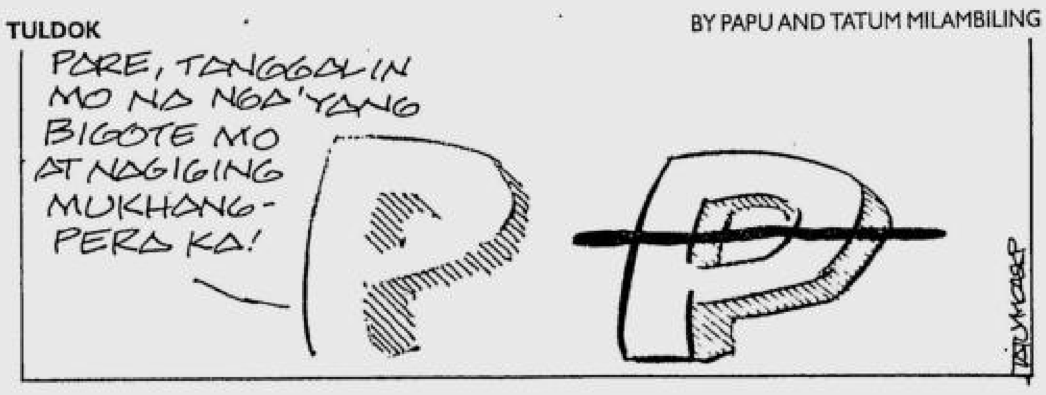
LOVEKNOTS

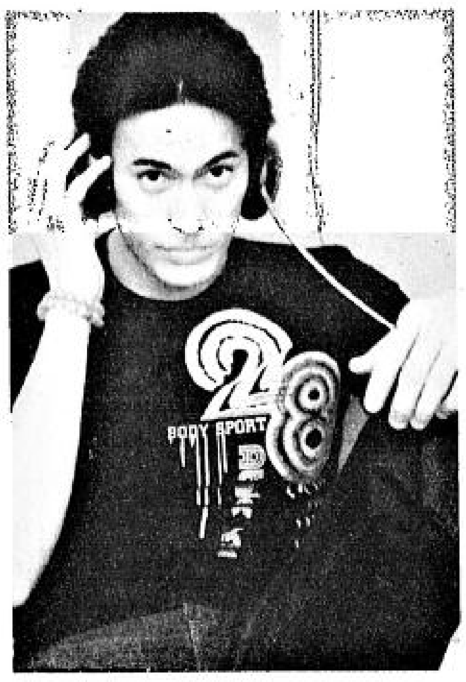
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANO BA YANG DROWING MO NA HINIHINGI MO KAY SANTA CLAUS SA PASKO?!
DROWING NG MANOK, BAKA AT BABOY!!
LARUANG MANOK, BAKA AT BABOY ANG HININGI MO KAY SANTA CLAUS?
HINDE!! LECHON MANOK, BAKA AT BABOY! SA PANAHON NGAYON, PAGKAIN ANG KAILANGAN NATIN HINDI LARUAN!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


PARE, TANGGALIN MO NA NGA 'YANG BIGOTE MO AT NAGIGING MUKHANG-PERA KA!
P
P


ON Francis: black printed shirt and dark denim jeans

ON Bubbles: long-sleeved blue top, khaki coat, and pleated green miniskirt. All accessories from Cinderella

Flirt, Cinderella's new line for men and women, is not for conservative people who stick to safe, blah fashion

ON her: aqua-blue top and white denim miniskirt. On him: gray shirt and denim jeans. All accessories from Cinderella

Ruffles, frills and all that sass

ON her: printed red-and-black top and black miniskirt. On him: Printed black top and pants

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Tootoots Leyesa

THE NAME says it all. Flirt, Cinderella's new line for men and women, is not for conservative people who stick to safe, no-frills fashion. It is, after all, all about frills—ribbons, ruffles, silk and other interesting trimmings, especially for women.

Guys, on the other hand, wouldn't have to stray from their comfort zone with cotton shirts and button-down polos, made more interesting with Flirt's signature details such as colorful stripes.

While the women's pieces are both romantic and trendy, a little restraint is practiced. The clothes are still practical, so ruffled skirts and lace camisoles share the stage with button-down shirts and suit jackets (in candy colors, of course—wouldn't want to lose that Flirty touch) that could go from work to dinner with a date. The women's collection also offers casual and cocktail dresses—no jeans here!

While the line offers lots of interesting pieces, the clothes won't burn a hole in your pocket. Although anyone with a fun sense of fashion could wear them, Flirt is ideal for students or young professionals who want to look good without blowing a lot of cash on clothes.

Prices start at around P500 for the tops, while pants and skirts are P800 up. Not a bad price to pay for clothes that could spruce up a boring wardrobe.

Check out Flirt at all Cinderella outlets in major malls nationwide.

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

ON her: floral halter top and ruffled skirt. On him: cream-colored button-down top and denim jeans. All accessories from Cinderella

---

Do blondes have more fun?

From page D1

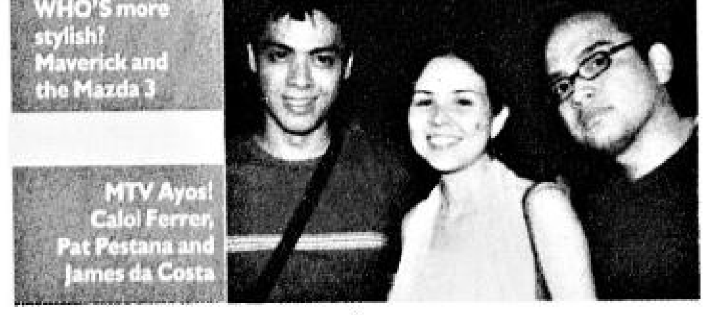
have to borrow **Tessa Prieto Valdes'** wigs. Two, I can now use all my L'Oreal Kerastase, Wella and Tigi hair products. Three, I can totally fit in—if and when I go to Japan.

But if you think being "light-headed" is all fun—guess again. Bleaching my full head of jet black hair four times over felt like 10 angry gay men were pulling my locks, as if their lives depended on it. After a while, I got numbed by the pain. What doesn't kill me will only make my hair, uh blonder? Okay, I shouldn't wax philosophical. This was pure vanity.

Safe than sorry?

Sometimes I try to trick my mind in order to take in something that it would normally give up on. Like thinking vegetables taste like Doritos. Or looking at the audience as if they're fully naked while I'm hosting (this tip I got from MTV VJ **Cindy Kurleto**—so as not to feel embarrassed when you forget your lines onstage). Or telling myself that my 150th abdominal crunch feels like an orgasm, or visualizing **Marc Nelson**'s chiseled abs cut and pasted on my body—you get my drift. But that's not my point.

WHO'S more stylish? Maverick and the Mazda 3


MTV Ayos! Caloi Ferrer, Pat Pestana and James da Costa

Aside from Henri, it was my buddy, **Epi Quizon**, who got me on this blonde trip. I saw him on the last few shows of "Midsummer Night's Dream," where he played a platinum-headed Puck. I think he's doing a film about the day when Pinoys have all gone blonde, with director **Peque Gallaga**. His co-star is top model **Nicolette Bell**.

One night last week, as Epi left V, a couple of guys pointed at him, laughing at his blonde hair. He approached them and asked, "Why, what's the problem?" He wasn't planning on picking a fight—but those guys chickened out anyway.

Funny how, even in an urban jungle like ours, you get these kinds of people who think that personal style is about fitting in, getting lost in a sea of sameness. "Better safe than sorry" is their personal motto.

I am not about to rally that everyone dye their hair blonde or wear teddy bears on their shoulders. I just feel that, maybe, we can all have a little more fun by going outside our comfort zones to "dare for more," as the Pepsi campaign battle cry would say.

I still remember my "impromptu" acceptance speech onstage with Tessa, to accept the style tribute for the Fearless Fashion Award: "I dedicate this award to all those who dare to make a statement in this country against all odds. We may mock them, we may love them—but we can't deny how they have opened our eyes as to how far style can take us."

So, live a little. Or live a lot! Just live.

Platinum dreams

Speaking of platinum, the hottest party last month was the launch of the American Express Card at the Makati Shang ballroom. "Exclusive privileges and unprecedented class of service"—that's the Amex promise. They did all that—and how!

DJ Steve Mills at Bellissima

MISSION accomplished. MTV's Lizette Claudio and Anne Matoto

[illegible]

I missed the **Vera Wang** fashion show, but I was right on time for the after-party, where I overheard a guest gush about the overflowing champagne and the chi-chi set who graced the event. A day after, the Amex girls went around Greenbelt, treating select guests to free cocktails. How's that for privilege?

While sipping my bubbly, I noticed that the guests were all agog over the wall decoration. Some models walked by and gave me a couple. When I looked at the back, it was signed by young artist **Bernard Paquing**! All of a sudden, I felt like one of those *matronas* who would take home four floral centerpieces—but I stopped myself. I just let my driver do it for me.

Plastic fantastic

The next day, another credit card was launched. The MTV Credit Card was being "flaunted" at Temple in Greenbelt. The VJs were flashing it like it was red-hot underwear. And they had reason to. Aside from the usual credit line, it gives the card holder hip and hot perks (discounts, freebies and access!)—so it's not just your regular plastic. It's plastic fantastic!

Equitable Bank bigwigs were all smiles as pop princess **Kyla** "flaunted" not just her card but her voice as well. I also saw **Jack Madrid**, MTV main man who's behind the music station's latest rebirth.

So why are all these credit card companies launching left and right? Well, it's 80 days till the Super! season! Can you hear it? (The overplayed jingle's in the malls.) Can you feel it? (The weather is getting cooler.)

It's closer than you think. (Enter **Joe Mari Chan**: "Whenever I see girls and boys selling lanterns on the streets...")

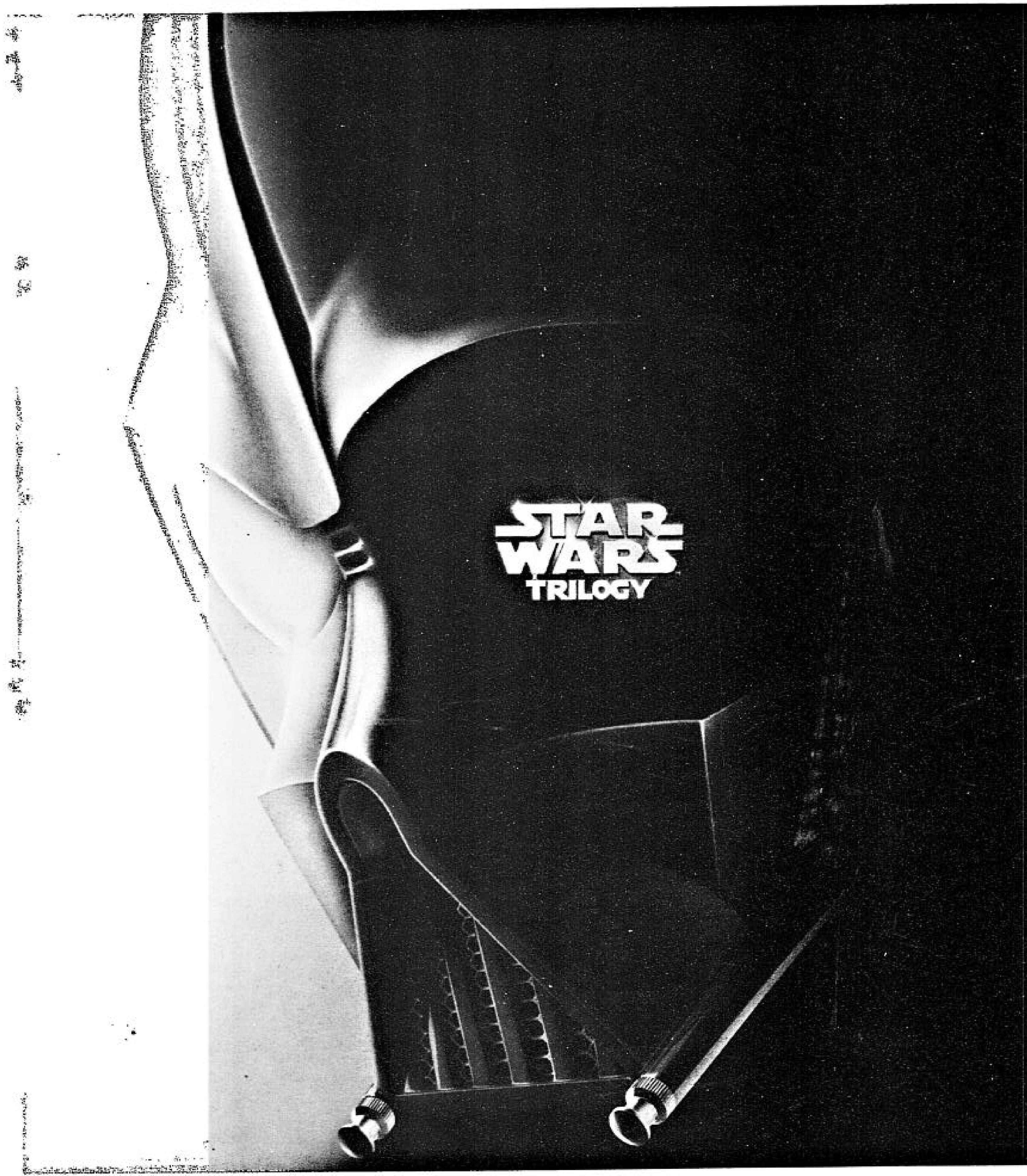
And it doesn't take somebody blonde to tell you that.

Fashion brand holds show and exhibit today

BAYO will mount its first runway show "A Girl Like You" today, 5 p.m., at Glorietta Activity Center.

To showcase Bayo's new image, a massive search for 25 young college girls who will walk the ramp in a Robbie Carmona directed spectacular was conducted. Young women from the nation's top universities were selected not only for their looks but also because of their unique personalities. MTV Style awards 2004 stylist of the year, Jenni Epperson will be styling the 50 plus piece collection.

Also part of the festivities is Bayo's Filipino and Proud Exhibit which will be unveiled before the show. The exhibit features photographs of 10 Filipina achievers captured by Xander Angeles, MTV Style Awards 2004 photographer of the year. Among the 10 are champion speaker Patricia Evangelista, Olympian Bea Lucero Lhuillier, makeup maestro Xeng Zulueta, lawyer Katrina Legarda, and Lea Salonga.



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